Salt

October 2017

The Art & Soul of Wilmington

The Legacy of Stede Bonnet

The Cape Fear's Gentleman Pirate

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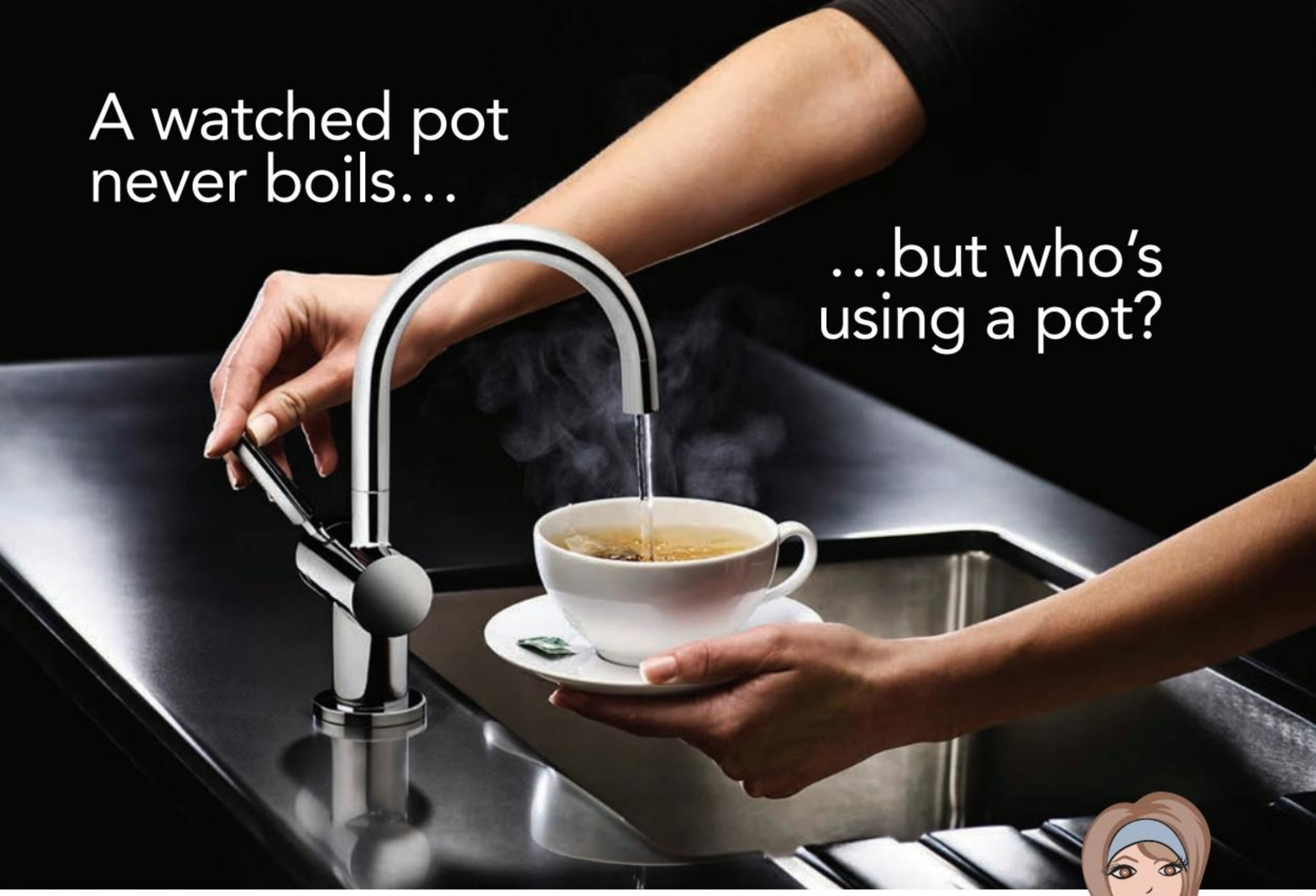

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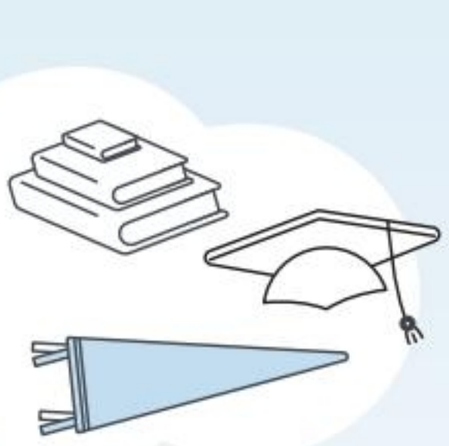

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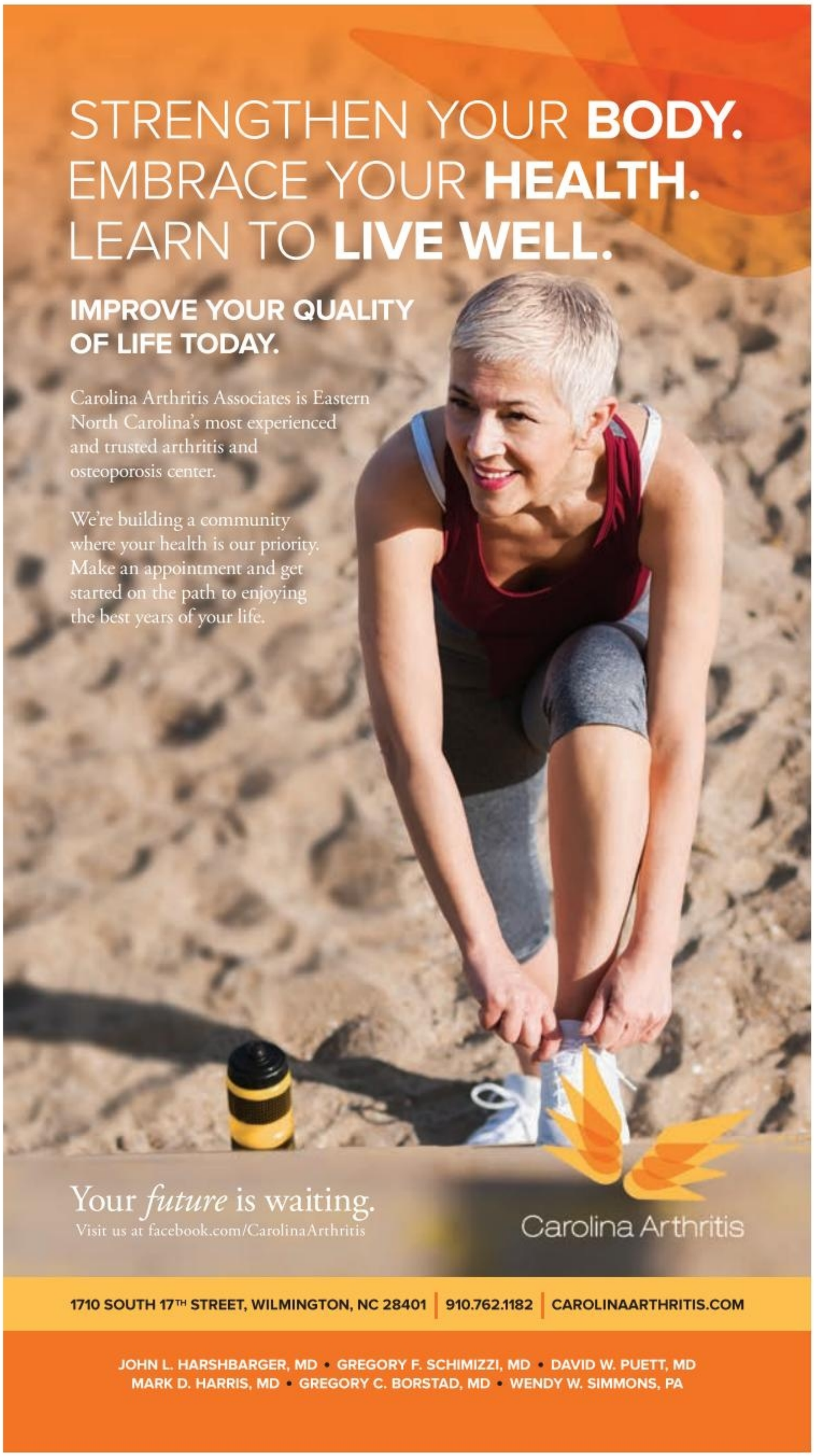
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October 2017

Features

43 Foggy Morning on 421
Poetry by Karen Filipski

44 The Gentleman Pirate **By Kevin Maurer**
The rise and fall of dashing Stede Bonnet – like his infamous mentor Blackbeard – brought to an end the golden age of piracy, but may have scattered the first seeds of democracy

48 Resting in Peace **By Virginia Holman**
The burying grounds and graveyards of the Cape Fear region are places of incomparable beauty and serenity

54 Being Harry Truman **By Gwenyfar Rohler**
Clifton Daniel, Harry Truman's grandson, brings his famous grandpa alive

56 The Whale House **By William Irvine**
On Bald Head Island, a home worthy of Captain Ahab's quest

69 Almanac **By Ash Alder**
Sunny spots, Harry Houdini's tricks, and the world's largest pumpkin

Departments

12 Simple Life
By Jim Dodson

16 SaltWorks

18 Omnivorous Reader
By D.G. Martin

21 A Writer's Life
By Wiley Cash

24 The Road Home
By Caroline Hamilton Langerman

27 Lunch With a Friend
By Dana Sachs

31 True South
By Susan Kelly

32 In the Spirit
By Tony Cross

35 Notes from the Porch
By Bill Thompson

36 Life of Jane
By Jane Borden

39 Birdwatch
By Susan Campbell

41 The Pleasures of Life Dept.
By Jason Mott

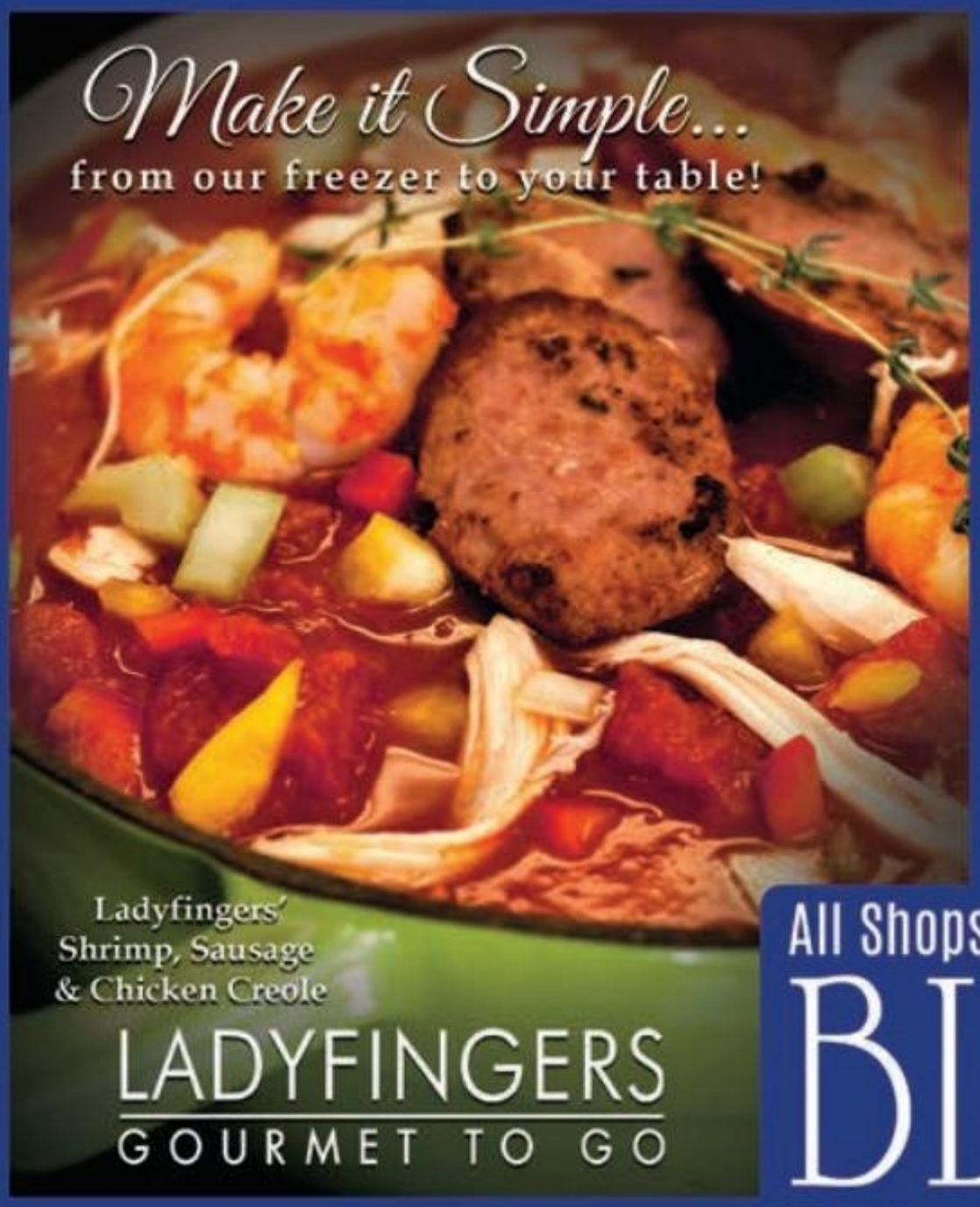
70 Calendar

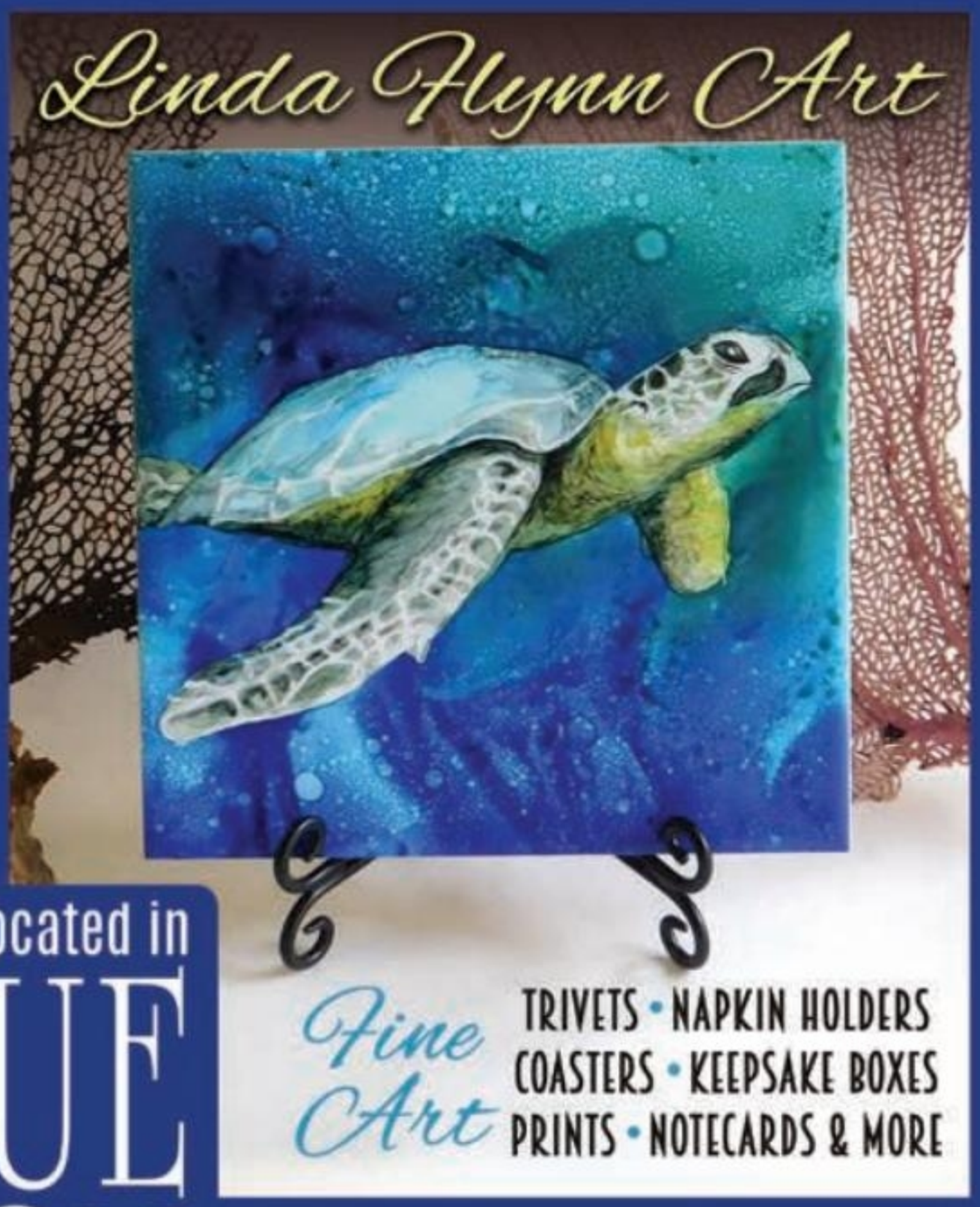
75 Port City People

79 Accidental Astrologer
By Astrid Stellanova

80 Looking Back

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN





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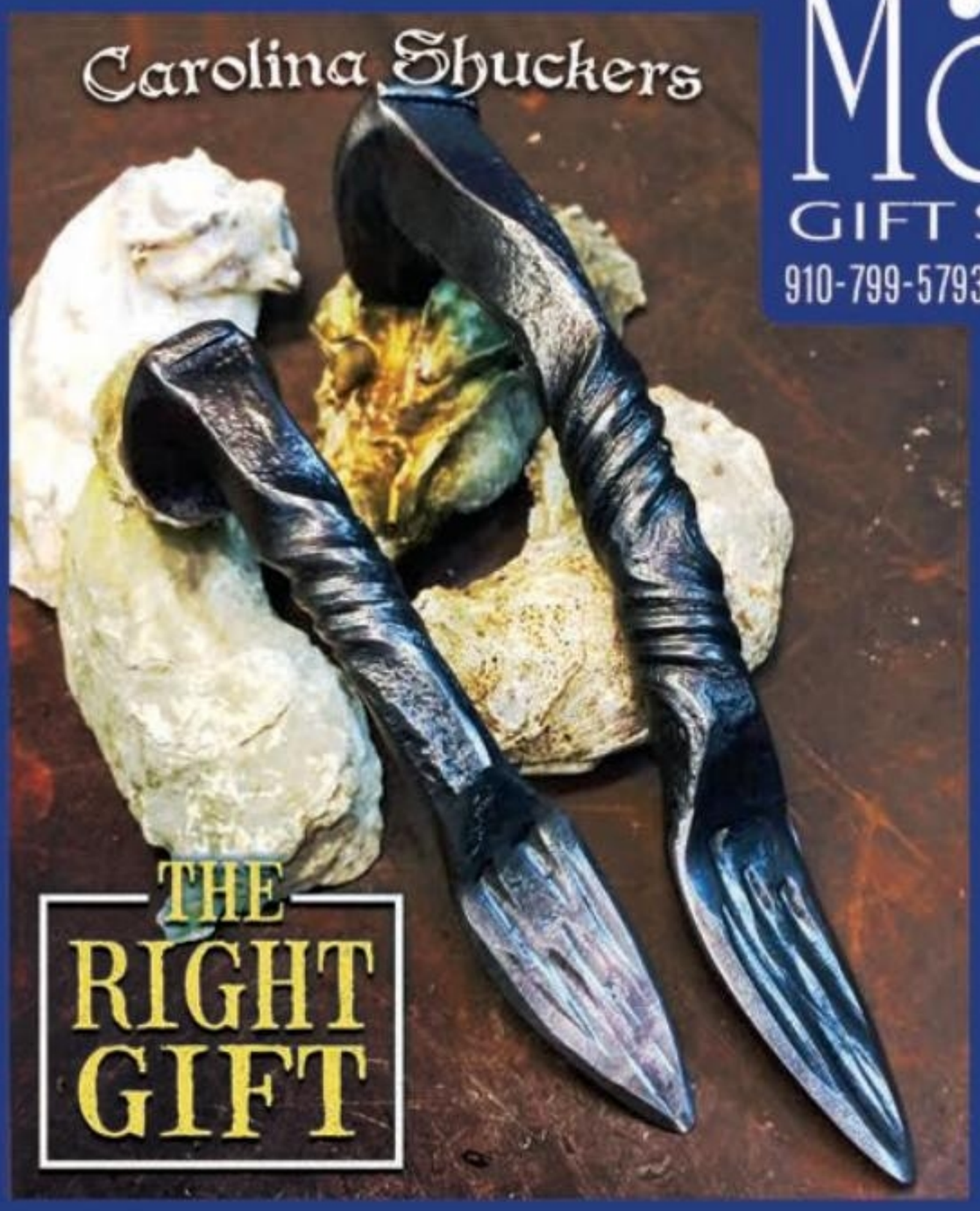

Prayers and Poetry

To see inward, first look up

By Jim Dodson

Early one morning not long ago, as I do most days, I took the day's first cup of Joe out to the front yard to sit for a spell in an old wooden Adirondack chair that provides a wide view of the night sky. Something about its vast clockwork beauty comforts me. My foundling dog, Mulligan, seems to dig our predawn ritual, too.

October and November's skies, particularly in the hours well before sunrise, are among the clearest of the year, and this particular morning was outstanding, with Venus shining over my left shoulder and a gibbous moon over the right, casting faint shadows on the lawn.

The stillness was deep, the silence broken only by a lone dog barking miles away and the sound of a train grinding over the horizon to its destination.

Such peaceful hours — my version, I suppose, of an ancient matins ritual, a venture into thin spaces — always restore something needed in me, a healing sense of optimism and gratitude. Pieces of my favorite poems and prayers waft through my mind.

The recovering journalist in me, however, understands that the serenity of a glittering firmament is either a gift from God or a grand parlor trick of the universe, merely the latest quiet before the storms of another day on this beautiful blue planet we inhabit.

As I sat there gazing up at the early stars, the largest Atlantic hurricane of modern times was bearing down upon the Florida Straits, a Cat 5 storm with eight million people in its sights. Overnight, an 8.1 earthquake had rocked the coast of Southern Mexico, the largest recorded in that nation in 100 years, killing 96, many in their beds.

This was mere days after a Gulf hurricane transformed Houston into a waterland of death and misery, robbing tens of thousands of their homes. There were also record wildfires burning out West and killer floods across India.

Suddenly I heard the voice of my old Latin teacher, Professor A.

"So, young souls, why are you here?" he asked on the first day of Introduction to Latin and the Classics. This was the fall of 1971.

A girl spoke up to say she believed Latin was necessary for the law career she hoped to have someday.

Another, aiming for medicine, concurred.

"I heard it was a fun class and I need three credits to graduate," offered some wiseguy in back. The class laughed.

Around the room it went until it came to me.

Truthfully, a freshman English lit and history major, I was there because I'd opted to sign up for three Latin courses in order to avoid a single course in calculus, what my faculty advisor referred to as the "classical death option."

"The second book I ever owned was an illustrated book of Greek and Roman Myths," I said, hoping that would suffice.

Professor A. smiled. "If I may ask, what was your first?"

"*The Little Prince*," I replied.

This brought another smile. "Perhaps someday you will be an astronaut."

Then, a bit of advice. "Anytime you wonder why you're really here on this Earth, I suggest that you simply look up and let the wonder fill you the way it grounded ancient travelers and sages. The sky makes philosophers of everyone."

Four autumns later, on my way home to Greensboro to take a job as a rookie reporter at my hometown paper, I dropped by Professor A.'s office to say thank you for opening a larger world to me. Because of him, I'd read Cicero and Ovid and a translated *Odyssey* and come to love the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. If my grasp of Latin wasn't the best, though a few bits bubble up from time to time, my understanding of the Roman and Greek minds was like a gift from the gods, something I would take with me — and turn to — throughout my life and career.

Luis Acevez was a dapper little man, a scholarly son of Guadalajara who favored tweed jackets and striped bowties. His bearing was formal, Old World. He stood and offered me his hand, wished me Godspeed with a hint of a-bow and that same Socratic smile. "Any time you lose your way or forget why you are here, just look up and the stars will remind you."

He went to his shelf and pulled out a slim volume, a new Penguin edition of Emperor Aurelius's famous meditations.

"Salve," he said, offering the classic Roman greeting which meant *Hail and Live Well!*

I saw Professor A. only one other time. If I believed in accidents, this might simply have been a happy one. But life has shown me there's no such thing as accidents.

Many years later, I was briefly visiting the campus to receive an honor for my writing. While killing time at the student bookstore, I spotted him — almost didn't recognize him without his tweeds and striped ties, not really sure he would remember me.

"Ah," he said with delight, "the young fellow who didn't become an astronaut after all."

I was touched that he remembered me. He'd been retired for more than a decade. I was even more touched when he mentioned that he'd taken great pleasure in following my career as a journalist.

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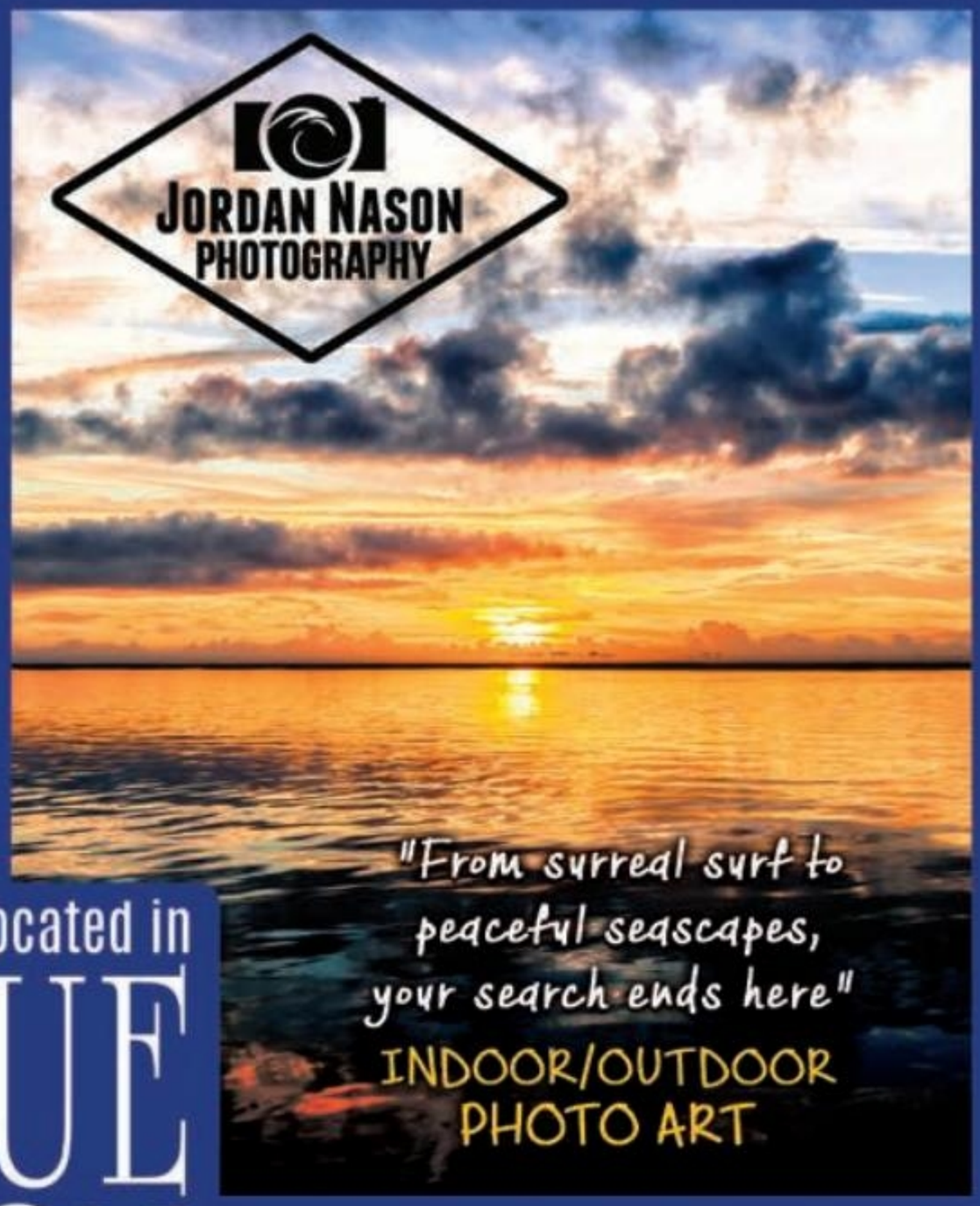

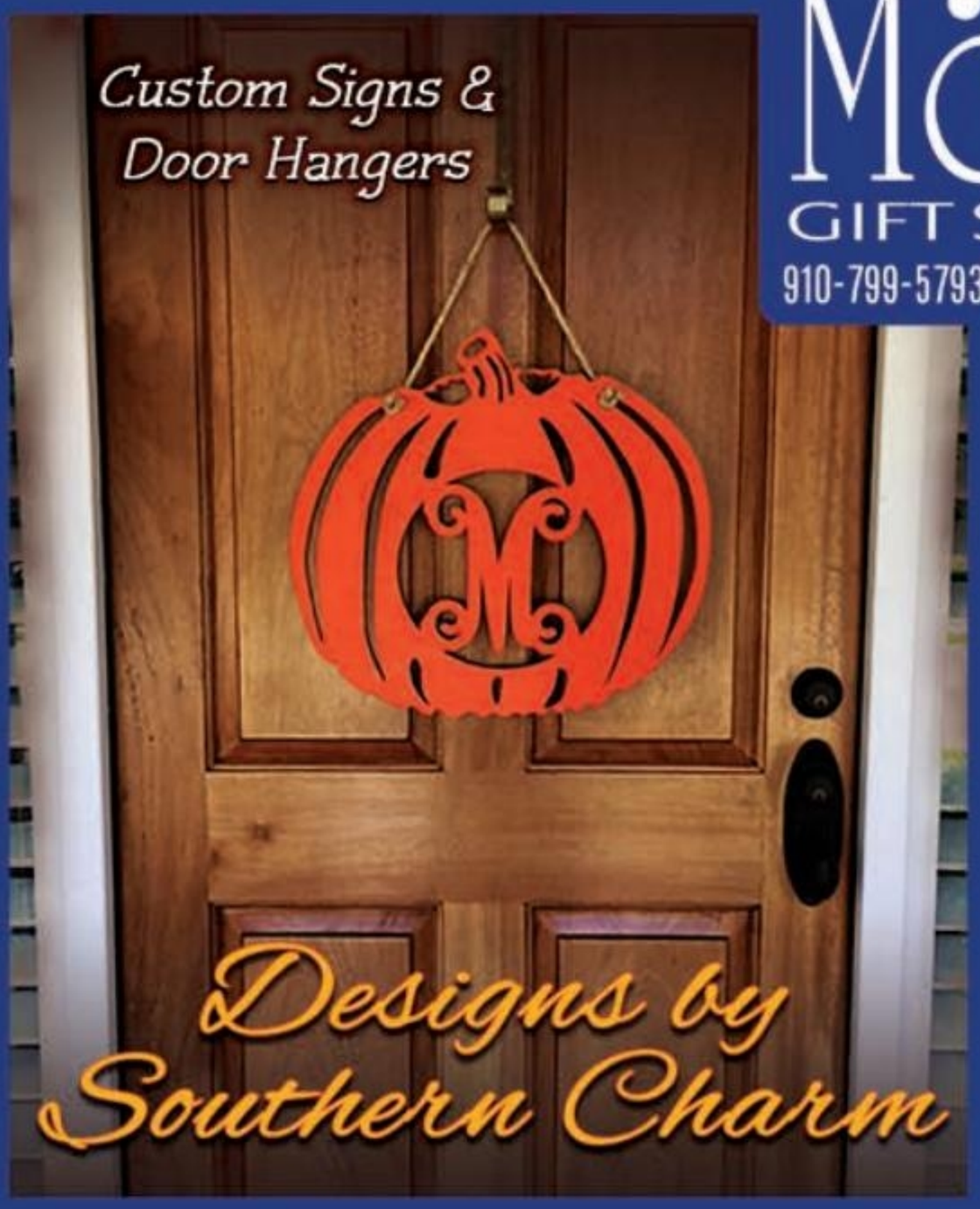

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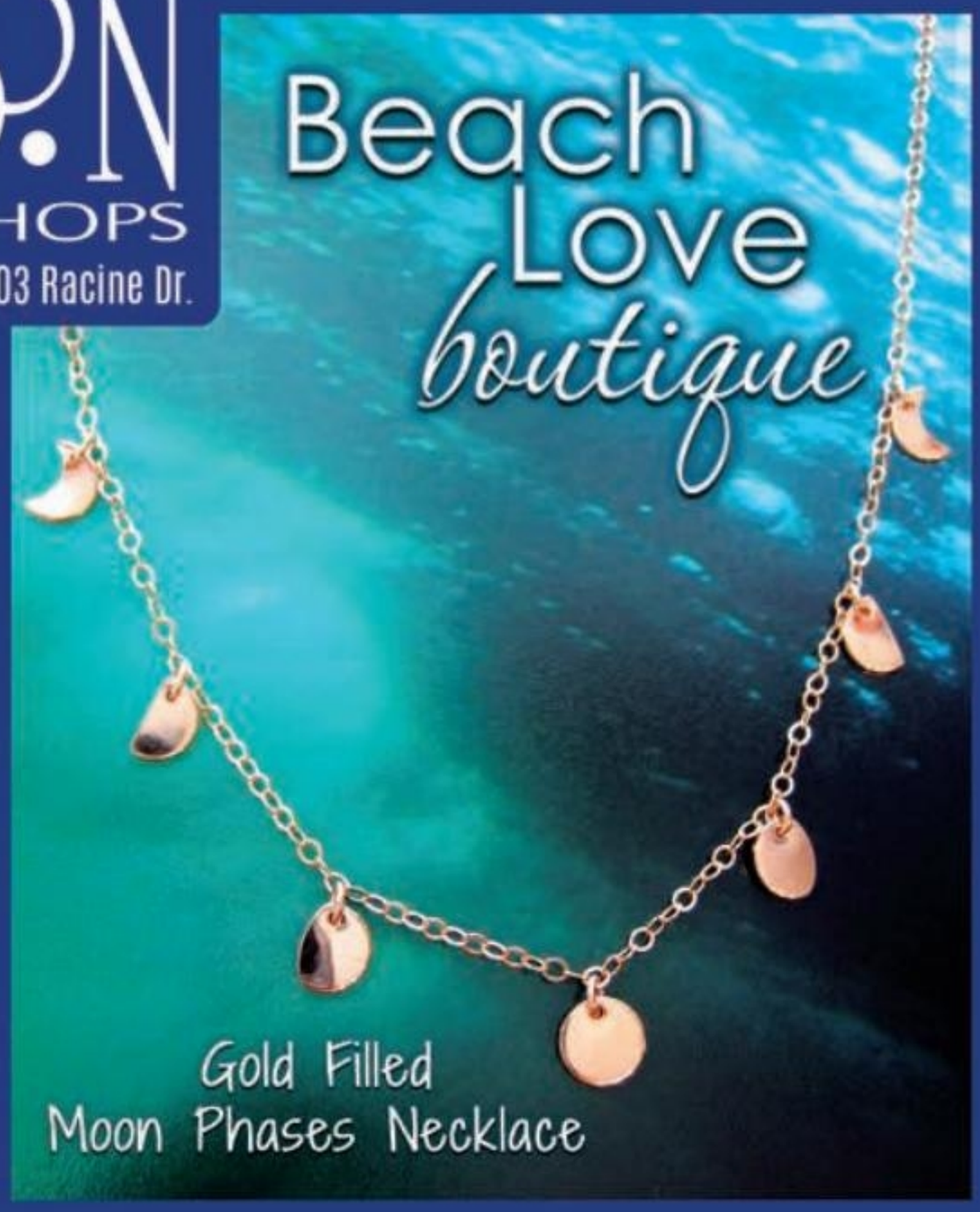

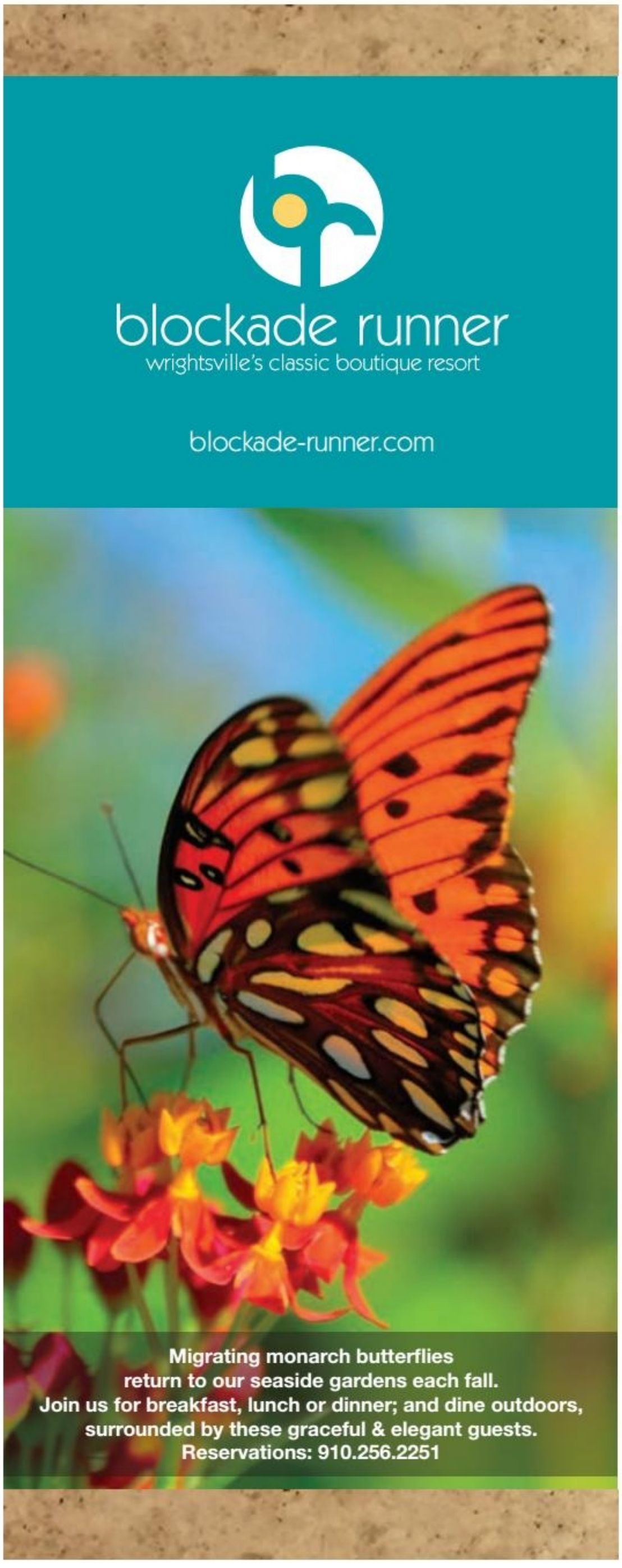
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By this point in my still-young working life, I'd written about everything from pointy-headed Klansmen in Alabama to serial killers in Atlanta. I'd covered so many misbehaving politicians and so much violent death and mayhem across my native South, I'd finally been forced to flee to a winding green river in Vermont to try to sort out the world and find a measure of inner peace. That's where I discovered arctic winter nights full of glittering stars and a silence so deep and healing, I heard my own pulse slowing down. That's where I reread the classics, rediscovered that old copy of the *Meditations* and started my life anew. My presence on the campus was because of a memoir I'd published about my final travels with a wise and funny father, an adman with a poet's heart who helped me find the way to a more fulfilling life.

Though I never mentioned his name, Professor A. had played a part in that eventual rebirth and memoir.

So I thanked him again for that new Penguin edition of the *Meditations* which was still with me, now dog-earred, impossibly marked up and coming apart at the seams.

This seemed to please him.

Since that time, whenever the world itself appeared to be coming apart at the seams, I have turned to poets and Rome's Philosopher King for useful perspective.

"And anytime I forget why I am here," I told my old professor, "I simply look up at the stars." He just smiled.

"Salve," he said.

"Salve," I returned the ancient greeting.

This is why I sit beneath the stars most mornings with my coffee and my dog, Mulligan, named for a second chance at life, regardless of season or weather. Even if they aren't visible, I know the stars are always there.

Often I send up a simple prayer of thanks — the medieval Christian mystic Meister Eckhart says a simple thank-you works wonders — and other times I simply think about poets and philosophers who've helped me on my long journey from darkness to light, especially an adman with a poet's heart and a dapper little professor who found his guidance in the stars.

"Last night," wrote the poet Wallace Stevens, "I spent an hour in the dark transept of St. Patrick's Cathedral where I go now and then in my lonely moods. An old argument with me is that the true religious force in the world is not the church but the world itself: the mysterious callings of Nature and our responses."

Over supper recently, a friend who described her pilgrimage to see the Summer's eclipse in totality as "a spiritual experience," remarked that the record hurricane and earthquake were merely Mother Earth explaining that we have become careless stewards of this marvelous blue planet.

I suddenly remembered a passage from the old Emperor that I committed to memory decades ago: "Think of your many years of procrastination; how the gods have repeatedly granted you periods of grace, of which you have taken no advantage. It is time to realize the nature of the universe to which you belong, and of that Controlling Power whose offspring you are; and to understand that your time has a limit to it. Use it, then, to advance your enlightenment."

Almost on cue for the gods, another old friend at the table who finds his deepest healing in making music with his one of his six guitars, began quoting a Southern troubadour named Walt Wilkins, whose song perfectly explained my mornings beneath the heavens.

I can't explain a blessed thing
Not a falling star, or a feathered wing
Or how a man in chains has the strength to sing
Just one thing is clear to me
There's always more than what appears to be
And when the light's just right
I swear I see poetry

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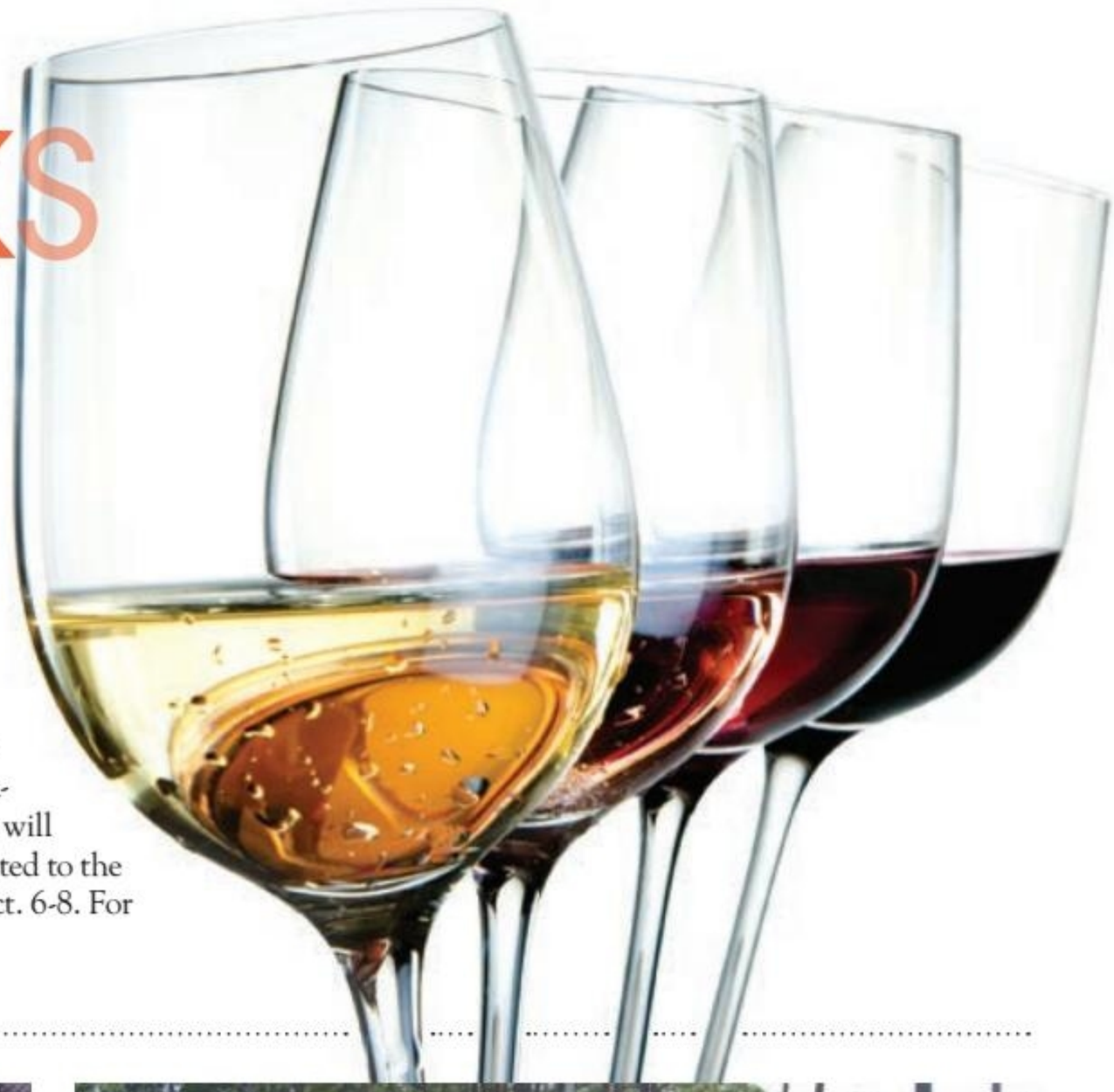


Coastal Roast

Bald Head Island Limited and *Southern Living* present "Roast and Toast on the Coast," a three-day celebration of great food and music. Among the events: a traditional oyster roast at the Bald Head Island Club; a cocktail party and tasting on the Common at Cape Fear Station with dinner by pit master Matt Register, of Southern Smoke BBQ; a *Southern Living*-inspired four-course dinner at the Shoals Club; Robert Parker wine tasting and seated dinner. There will also be an outdoor bluegrass concert by The Midatlantic. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Old Baldy Foundation, which is dedicated to the preservation of the island's historic lighthouse. Oct. 6-8. For tickets and information: roasttoastcoast.com.

Fire in the Pines

The piney woods of Halyburton Park will be the setting for the Fire in the Pines Festival, an outdoor environmental family event. In addition to an appearance by Smokey Bear, there will be hayrides, food trucks, a helicopter and other assorted fire equipment, and a demonstration of a controlled burn with a discussion of its importance to the Cape Fear ecosystem. Oct. 14. Admission is free. Halyburton Park, 4099 S. 17th St., Wilmington. For more information: (910) 395-5000 or fireinthepines.org.

A Plein-Air Affair

The Wilmington Art Association and the Friends of the New Hanover County Arboretum combine forces of art and nature for the 22nd annual "Art in the Arboretum," featuring local artists' work displayed throughout the gardens. In addition to performances by local musicians there will be a raffle and silent auction. There will be a judged art show with prizes awarded to participating artists. Oct. 6-8. Admission: $5. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6202 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For more information: (910) 297-7283 or wilmington-art.org.

Aww, Shucks…

The 37th annual N.C. Oyster Festival in Ocean Isle will feature all manner of celebrations of the succulent bivalve. In addition to oyster eating and shucking competitions, local restaurants will compete in a cook-off for the North Carolina Oyster Stew Champion title. There will also be a variety of musical performances and a Sunday shag contest. Oct. 21-22. Admission: $5; children under 12 free. 8 East Second St., Ocean Isle Beach. For information: (910)-754-6644 or ncoysterfestival.com.

Harry and Marilyn

October at Thalian Hall features a bumper crop of shows — and a pair devoted to legendary Americans.

Simon Gallu's *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* is a one-man show about the life of the 33rd American president, Harry Truman. The performance stars the president's grandson (a theater first), Clifton Truman Daniel, a frequent lecturer and the author of several books about the Truman family. Oct. 12-22 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $38.

Wilmington native Erin Sullivan stars in *With Love, Marilyn*, a new musical that pays homage to the life of the late actress Marilyn Monroe. Sullivan is co-producer, co-writer and star of this production, which received rave reviews in New York; Thalian Hall is the first stop on a national tour. Oct. 13. Tickets are $22-40.

Thalian Center for the Performing Arts, 310 Chestnut St. For more information and reservations for all performances: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

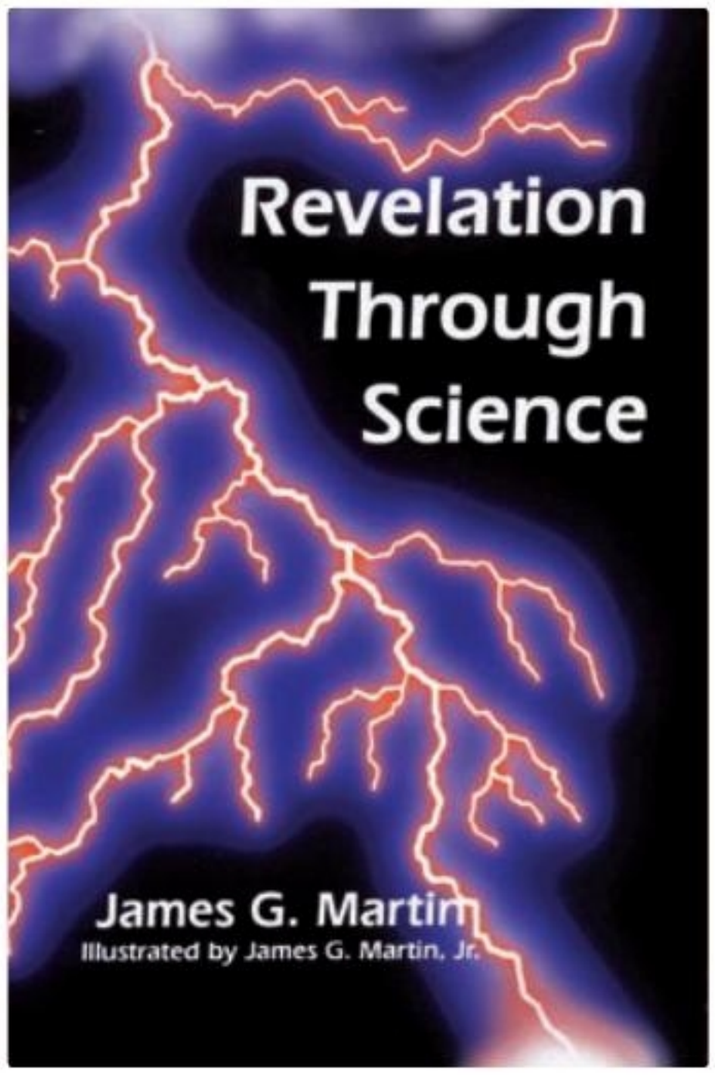
Beer Then Wine, Feeling Fine

Lighthouse Beer and Wine of Wrightsville Beach teams up with the Carousel Center for their 16th annual Beer and Wine Festival. More than 100 craft breweries and wineries participate in this event, which benefits the Center, a nonprofit organization that assists victims of child abuse and provides critical care services to children in 15 counties of southeastern North Carolina.

Admission includes entrance to the festival grounds, a drinking glass and unlimited beer and wine tasting. Thankfully, free shuttle service to greater Wilmington will be available after the festival. Bottoms up! Oct. 28, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Tickets: $15-55. North Waterfront Park, 11 Harnett St., Wilmington. For more information: (910) 538-9270 or lighthousebeerandwine.com.

Martin's Mixture

A former two-time governor argues that science points to God



By D.G. Martin

What would be rarer

than a total eclipse of the sun?

My answer: a serious book about science or religion written by a former governor of North Carolina or any other state.

We had our solar eclipse in August, and our former two-term governor Jim Martin has given us a serious book on both science and religion.

As the son of a Presbyterian minister and a Davidson College and Princeton University trained chemist, Martin is a devoted believer — in both his religion and the scientific method. His book *Revelation Through Science: Evolution in the Harmony of Science and Religion* is his effort to show that the discoveries of science pose no threat to Christianity or any other religion.

He is a champion of the scientific method and, without apology, endorses the discoveries his fellow scientists have made, including the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe and basics of the Theory of Evolution.

But, as a lifelong Christian, he believes the Bible is "the received word of God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of any life it holds, on Earth or elsewhere. I believe the Bible is our best guide to faith and practice.

"I believe there is, and can be, no irreconcilable conflict between science and religion, for they are revealed from the same God. Even more than that, as a Christian, I believe that God is most clearly revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I firmly believe that a loving God intended us to have the capacity to observe and interpret nature, so that we would grow in understanding the majesty and mystery of His creation and all that followed."

How can Martin reconcile his scientific truths with the biblical account of a six-day creation or with the related belief that the Earth was created about 6,000 years ago?

He admits that has not always been easy. When he was active in politics and serving as governor from 1985 through 1993, he would sometimes avoid discussion of these questions. For instance, once during his time as governor he visited the small town of Hobucken on Pamlico Sound. He stopped at the local fishing supply store at R. E. Mayo Fish & Supply and saw a "monstrous skeletal whale head standing right outside the store."

Martin remarked to some of the local people, "Wow! That whale must have lived and died there millions of years ago!"

In his book, Martin writes that everything got quiet. Then, one person responded, "No, sir, we reckon she couldn't have been there more'n six thousand years!"

Martin admits, "I did not stand my ground and debate the age of the Earth with these fine gentlemen. I knew what I knew, part of which was that they knew what they knew, and this debate was not winnable."

Now Martin is ready, not to debate, but to explain that science's conclusions about the time of creation (13.7 billion years ago) and the age of the Earth (4.5 billion years ago) are firmly based. More importantly for him, they are not in conflict with religion, including the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis.

In his 400-page book he lays out a seminar for the "educated non-scientist," explaining the awesome complexities and orderliness of our world. He gives details of the sciences of astronomy, physics, biology, evolution, geology, paleontology, organic chemistry, biochemistry and genomics, including efforts to spark living organisms from inert chemicals.

With every scientific advance or explanation of how the world came about and works now, Martin says there is a further revelation from the Creator.

Does he assert that these advances prove the existence of God?

No, but throughout the book he points out what he calls "anthropic coincidences" that made for a universe that "was physically and chemically attuned very precisely for the emergence of life, culminating thus far in an intelligent, self-aware species."

Recently he explained to me the importance of the power of gravity or the "gravity constant." "If the pull of gravity were slightly stronger," he said, "the universe would've collapsed. If it was slightly weaker, there'd be no stars, the same, because it had to be precisely balanced with the energy and power of that burst of expansion from the beginning, so astronomers therefore conclude that there was a beginning, just as in Genesis 1:1, In the beginning, Pow."

Martin explained that, like gravity, "there are a number, about a half dozen, physical constants, all of which are precisely balanced for us to be here. One astronomer said, 'It's as if the universe knew we were coming.' All of this implies purpose, and science cannot ask questions about purpose. Science

cannot get answers about purpose, but that doesn't mean there's no purpose. It's clear from this evidence that we didn't get here by unguided chance. In that way, science points to God. In that way, science tells us that God is. Science does not tell us who God is. It doesn't differentiate between different denominations, different theological traditions, or insights, or reasonings, but it does support all of them in that sense."

If these discussions of science and religion are too complicated for readers, they should not put down the book before reading its final chapter in which Martin describes his personal journey of faith, study, service, and tolerance and respect for the opinions of those who see things differently.

As a political figure and former Republican governor, does Martin share his thoughts on science and politics?

He asks his readers, "Which political party is anti-science?"

Their answer, he says, would likely reveal their political orientation.

Martin agrees with Alex Berezow, founding editor of the "RealClearScience" website. Berezow asserts that partisans in both parties are "equally abusive of science and technology, albeit on different topics and issues."

Martin confesses that several positions held by many Republicans are unsustainable in light of the findings of science. He notes that some Republicans believe global warming is a myth.

But, he writes, "Denial is indefensible."

He continues, "Instead of futile denial that excessive carbon dioxide from combustion of coal and oil contributes to global warming, Republicans should let science be science."

Anyone who thinks this statement represents Martin's complete acceptance of a liberal environmentalist position on clean energy would be misled. His response to the carbon crisis is increased reliance on nuclear power because wind and solar alternatives can only make minor contributions to our energy needs. In bold print he asserts, "If we cannot accept nuclear power as an irreplaceable part of the solution, how serious are we about the problem?"

Whether or not you agree with Martin's views on religion, science or politics, his book is a welcome gift to a country that is in great need of what his book gives us: clear, thoughtful, and respectful discussion of important, misunderstood, and controversial topics.

Too bad such books are as rare as a total solar eclipse.

D.G. Martin hosts North Carolina Bookwatch, *which airs Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV.*

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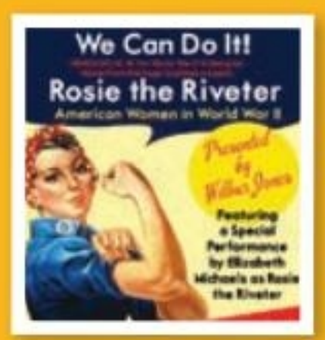
We Can Do It!
Rosie the Riveter
American Women in World War II
Presented by Wilbur Jones
Featuring a Special Performance by Elizabeth Michaels as Rosie the Riveter

***Thalian Association's Rosie the Riveter*: A Preview**

Presented by: Wilbur Jones, Retired Navy Captain, Military Author & Historian and Thalian Association

Thursday, October 5th, 2017 at 3:00 PM

Join us for a Preview of Thalian Association's "Rosie the Riveter", a one-woman show, to be presented on October 20th and 22nd at the Hannah Block Historic USO Community Arts Center. Explore the Rosie phenomenon, how Rosie impacted the postwar women's liberation movement and about American Women in World War II.

RSVP by Wednesday, October 4th

***A Circus Life* : Part II of The Intriguing Cultures Series**

Presented by: Fritzi Huber

Monday, October 9th, 2017 at 2:00 PM

Ladies and Gentlemen, Children of All Ages . . . The 1950's was a rich and prosperous time for circus in the US. Fritzi Huber was a circus child at this time in history, and her father loved shooting home movies — circus home movies. Come and see these films with narrative by Ms. Huber. Q & A will follow and bring your circus memories to share!

RSVP by Friday, October 6th

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***BBQ & Bluegrass*: 10th Annual Fall Festival Fundraiser for Alzheimers**

Presented by: Brightmore of Wilmington and Alzheimer's NC

Friday, October 27th, 2017 from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Join us for an evening of Fall fun as we commemorate and kick-off November's Alzheimer's Awareness Month! Enjoy Brightmore Executive Chef, Ryan's McCoy's Award-winning BBQ, Rotisserie Chicken, or Hot Dogs — with all the fixins', plus beverages, desserts, and more! As you revel in the Americana, Bluegrass and Country music sounds of popular local band, L Shape Lot, Toast Marshmallows by our Fire, you can purchase your event tickets onsite redeemable for the Evening's Food, Beer, Wine, Hay Rides, Games, and Chances to Win one or more of the 75+ Displayed Raffle Items, all generously donated by the local business community. Proceeds benefit Alzheimer's North Carolina and support local families caring for those with Alzheimer's or dementia. For more information, email mstacy@libertyseniorliving.com.

RSVP by Tuesday, October 24th

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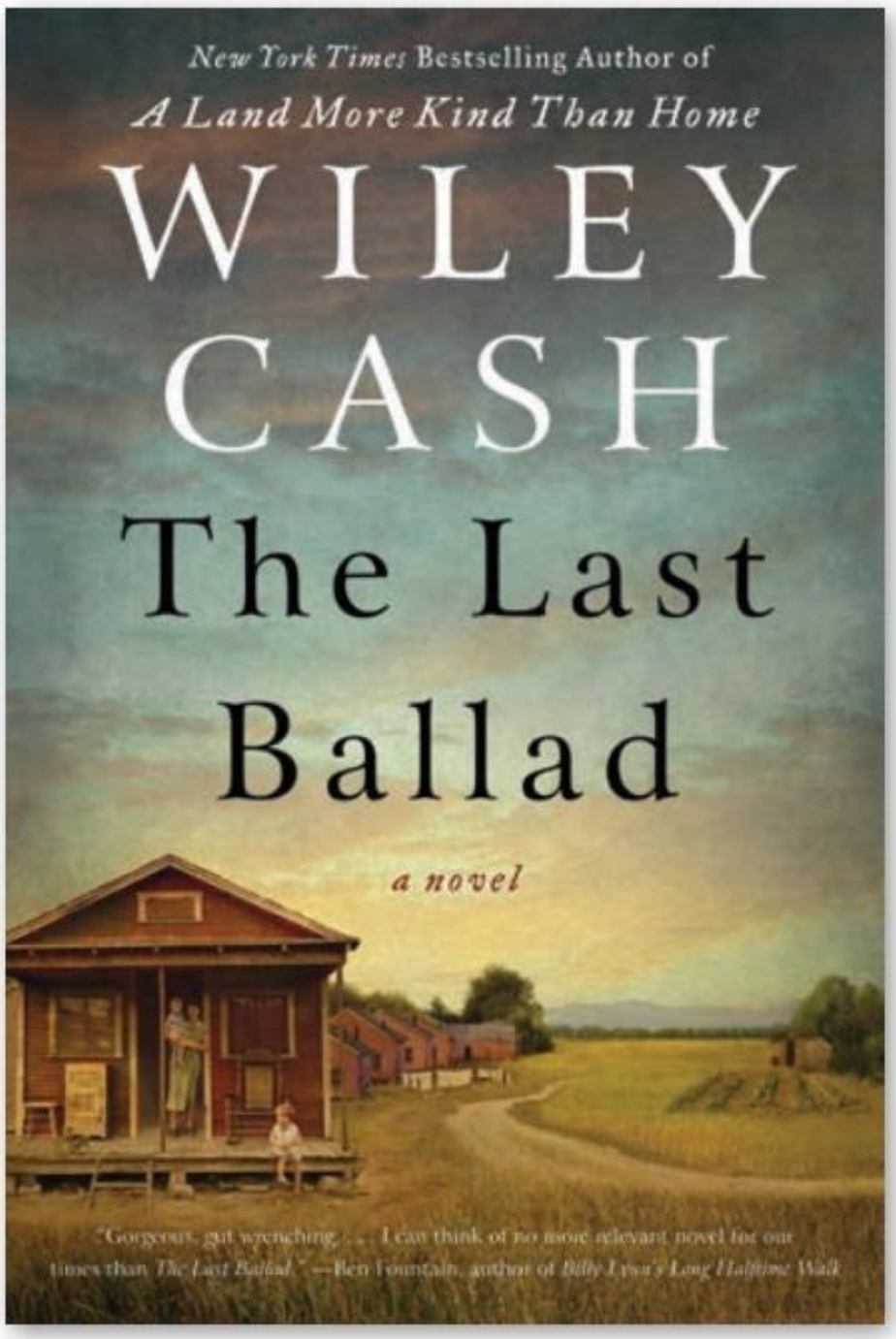
Writing *The Last Ballad*

The story behind the story, and an excerpt

By Wiley Cash

When I began writing my new novel *The Last Ballad*, an excerpt of which is printed here, my wife and I were living in Morgantown, West Virginia. It was the fall of 2012. My first novel, *A Land More Kind Than Home*, had been published in April, and I had recently completed the manuscript for my second novel, *This Dark Road to Mercy*. I had two novels behind me, but that fall I was staring down a story that I did not believe I had the talent or the heart to tackle. That story was the story of the Loray Mill strike, which unfolded over the spring and summer of 1929 in my hometown of Gastonia, North Carolina.


New York Times Bestselling Author of
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CASH
The Last
Ballad
a novel
"Gorgeous, gut wrenching . . . I can think of no more relevant novel for our times than The Last Ballad." —Ben Fountain, author of Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk

Although I grew up in Gastonia, I never heard a word about the strike or about the young woman who became the face of it. Ella May Wiggins was 28 years old when the strike occurred. She had given birth to nine children, but only five of them survived poverty-related illnesses. Her husband had abandoned her for what looked to be the final time. She earned $9 for a 72-hour workweek in a mill in Bessemer City, North Carolina. Like many people on the eve of the Great Depression, Ella and her children were barely hanging on. After learning about the strike at the nearby Loray Mill, Ella joined the National Textile Workers Union and wrote and sang protest ballads that were later performed by Woody Guthrie and recorded by Pete Seeger. She traveled to Washington, D.C., and confronted senators about working conditions in Southern mills. She integrated the labor union against the will of local officials. But these bold actions that Ella took were not without consequence. The decisions she made would alter the course of her life and affect her family for generations.

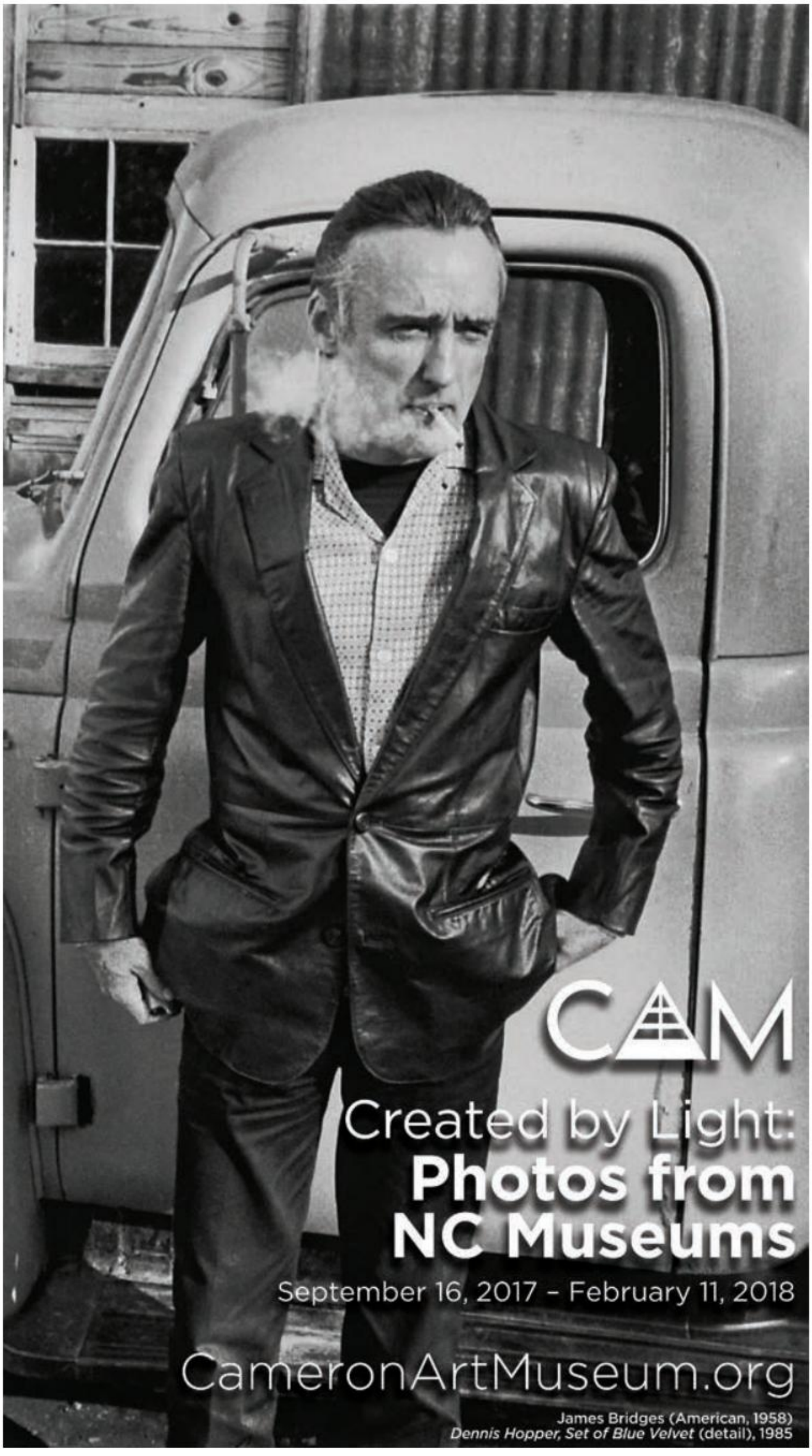
I first learned of the strike and the story of Ella May Wiggins after leaving North Carolina for graduate school in Louisiana. I considered writing about her over the years, but each time I sat down to write I struggled to tell Ella's story for two reasons. First, not much is known about her. She was born in east Tennessee in 1900. She lost her parents and married young and had children with a no-good man. She left the mountains for the good life promised by the mills in the South Carolina upstate and North Carolina piedmont. She lost children. Her husband disappeared. She joined the strike. Then her tragic life spiraled further toward tragedy. Details of her life are scant, and I knew that if I were going to write about Ella I would have to be comfortable telling a story that I could not learn. But that is what writers do: We allow the germ of an idea, be it the idea of a story or the idea of a person, to infiltrate our minds, and we attempt to meet that idea with our own creations. I was prepared to do that.

What I was not prepared to do was face the second thing that made writing about Ella's life so difficult: How could I possibly put words to the tragedies in her life and compress them on the page in a way that allowed readers to glean some semblance of her struggle?

I began working on the novel in earnest in the spring of 2013, and then my own life got in the way. My wife and I left West Virginia and returned to our beloved North Carolina after being away from home for 10 years. We had a daughter in September 2014, and then another daughter in April 2016. I lost my father a month a later.

While attempting to chronicle the tragedies, as well as the many triumphs, of Ella's life, I was blind to the goings-on in my own. When my wife and I returned to North Carolina it gave me the chance to revisit the sorrow of my leaving it a decade earlier, and I thought about Ella leaving the Tennessee hills, a place she would never see again, for the linty air of a mill village. Unconsciously, each time I held one of my newborn daughters in my arms I wondered how Ella had managed to continue on after losing four children. When I lost my father at 38 I found myself wondering how Ella had weathered the deaths of both parents before even turning 20. While I knew I could never understand the power of Ella's life, perhaps I could harness it by exploring the depths and pinnacles of my own.

In the following excerpt, which opens the novel, you will meet a young woman named Ella May Wiggins who is still reeling after leaving home over a decade ago. She has lost a child, and she fears she may lose more. She is struggling to survive and keep her children alive. But she is tough, tougher than me for sure, probably tougher than anyone I have ever known. It was an honor to



write about her and put words to a story that has been untold for far too long.

* * *

Ella May knew she wasn't pretty, had always known it. She didn't have to come all the way down the mountain from Tennessee to Bessemer City, North Carolina, to find that out. But here she was now, and here she'd been just long enough for no other place in her memory to feel like home, but not quite long enough for Bessemer City to feel like home either.

She sat on the narrow bench in the office of American Mill No. 2 — the wall behind her vibrating with the whir of the carding machines, rollers, and spinners that raged on the other side, with lint hung up in her throat and lungs like tar — reminding herself that she'd already given up any hope of ever feeling rooted again, of ever finding a place that belonged to her and she to it. Instead of thinking thoughts like those, Ella turned and looked at Goldberg's brother's young secretary where she sat behind a tidy desk just a few feet away. The soft late-day light that had already turned toward dusk now picked its way through the windows behind the girl. The light lay upon the girl's dark, shiny hair and caused it to glow like some angel had just lifted a hand away from the crown of her head. The girl was pale and soft, her cheeks brushed with rouge and her lips glossed a healthy pink. She wore a fine powder-blue dress with a spray of artificial, white spring flowers pinned to the lapel. She read a new copy of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and she laughed to herself and wet her finger on her tongue and turned page after page while Ella watched.

How old could that girl be? Ella wondered. Twenty? Twenty-five? Ella was only twenty-eight herself, but she felt at least two, three times that age. She stared at the girl's dainty, manicured hands as they turned the pages, and then she looked down at her own hands where they rested upturned in her lap, her fingers intertwined as if they'd formed a nest. She unlocked her fingers and placed her palms flat against her belly, thought about the new life that had just begun to stir inside her, how its stirring often felt like the flutter of a bird's wing. She didn't know whether or not what she felt was real, so she'd decided not to say a word about it to Charlie, not to mention a thing to anyone aside from her friend Violet.

Charlie had blown into Bessemer City that winter just like he'd blown into other places, and Ella knew that one day he'd eventually blow out the same way he'd come in. He didn't have children or a family or anything else to tether him to a place where he didn't want to be.

"I hadn't never wanted a child," he'd said after they'd known each other for a month. "I just never found the right woman to care for a child

the way I want it cared for." He'd come up behind Ella and spread his palm over her taut belly as if trying to keep something from spilling out. She'd felt his hand press against the hollowed-out space between her ribs and her hips. She was always so racked with hunger that she found it hard to believe that her body offered any resistance at all. "But who's to say I'm always going to feel that way?" he'd said. "I might want a family of my own just yet." Maybe he'd meant it then, and, if so, she hoped he still meant it now.

Perhaps it was the soft thrash of wings against the walls of her belly that made Ella think further of birds, and she considered how her thin, gnarled hands reminded her of a bird's feet. She placed her palms on her knees, watched her knuckles rise like knobby mountains, saw her veins roll beneath her skin like blue worms that had died but never withered away. What was left of her fingernails were thick and broken, and it was laughable to imagine that someone like Ella would ever spend the time it would take to use a tiny brush to color such ugly things.

She resisted the urge to lift these awful hands to her face and allow those fingers to feel what waited there: the sunken, wide-set, dark eyes; the grim mouth that she imagined as always frowning because she did not believe she had ever smiled at herself when looking into a mirror, and she had only seen one photograph of herself in her lifetime, and she was certain that she was not smiling then. She recalled the photograph of a younger version of herself taken more than ten years ago; she and John and baby Lilly posing for a traveling photographer inside the post office down in Cowpens, South Carolina. John with his arm thrown around Ella's shoulder, his face and eyes lit with the exaltation of the gloriously drunk, Lilly crying in her arms, what Ella knew to be her own much younger face blurred in movement as it turned toward Lilly's cries at the exact moment of the camera's looking. John had purchased the photo, folded it, and kept it in a cigar box that rattled with loose change and the quiet rustle of paper money when and if they had it. Ella had removed the photograph and gazed upon it from time to time over the years, but never to look at her own face. She'd only wanted to see the face of her firstborn, the girl who was now a tough, independent young lady who mothered her little sister and brothers more than Ella had the time or the chance or the energy to. John had left her — left them all, for that matter — over a year ago, and Ella assumed that he'd taken the cigar box with him because Lord knows he'd taken all that money, but the only thing that Ella missed now was the photograph.

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His forthcoming novel The Last Ballad *is available for pre-order wherever books are sold.*

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The Bonnet Blues

Having a second baby was a dream come true – though a bit of a challenge at first

By Caroline Hamilton Langerman

The summer I moved from New York to North Carolina with a 1-year-old boy, I was already eager to have a baby girl. It was all about the bonnets. Here in the Old North State, parents still embraced the traditional style of pastel day-gowns and smocked jumpers. My son was wearing a little white bucket hat that tied under his chin; he needed a sister in a sundress.

Babies, my Southern grandmother had taught me, should wear soft colors. Baby Gap might try to trick me with its tiny jeans, orange onesies and mini sneakers, but my new city was protected from fads by a population of sleek, tailored mothers. "Yummy Mummies," I had heard someone call them, and while the expression made me gag a little, I couldn't help but hear it in my head every time I pulled into the preschool parking lot and saw a tall blonde hopping down from a Chevvy Tahoe in yoga pants. She often had two — sometimes three! — babies, all in matching sailor suits or gingham jumpers. I was not blonde, and I felt naked in yoga pants. But I had a strong set of biceps; surely I, too, could lift well-dressed babies out of an SUV.

My baby boy was fairly easy: He ate, he slept. Once, we brought him in a bassinet to a work function and a colleague asked if he were a waxen doll. But the new baby, who arrived in the middle of a snowstorm, was not a waxen doll. The new baby screwed up her little red face and wailed. The new baby made my other baby cry. I didn't even take the pink Feltman Brothers gowns out of the wrapping paper; she was spitting up like a professional. One by one, friends and family uttered the word "colic." I was thankful that my 18-month-old liked siren sounds.

At her 2-month checkup, I hoisted the 30-pound car seat and my 30-pound toddler into the examination room, both kids bawling. They cried so hard that the doctor and I could not hear each other say hello. They cried so hard that when the doctor said, "Do you have any questions?" I crumpled up my list and said no. They cried so hard that when the doctor left the room I almost started crying, which made my older son cry harder. I bit my lip as I plugged him with Goldfish.

When I opened the door, three nurses peered in, as if upon a petri dish.

"We couldn't believe," one of them said in a gentle Southern accent, "that all that crying was coming from the same room."

"Yes," I said numbly, and lifted the car seat with an aching bicep.

"Come to the beach and get some help," my parents said from the coast in Wilmington. I packed the criers into the car and listened to them wail down Highway 74. We arrived exhausted, soaked through with milk and pee and drool, and as I handed the miserable baby to her grandmother, my son yelled the names of vehicles: "Log loader! Dirt digger!" At the end of night two, my mother said sympathetically, "You weren't exaggerating."

My dad, more agitated than sympathetic, pressed pause on the nightly news and requested to know the next day's plan. The word "plan" sent me to a mental state somewhere between fuming and hysterical. Here was my plan: I stuffed the little baby into her baby-backpack and chased my son through their un-baby-proofed home, which now appeared less a beach retreat and more a haunted house of spooky staircases and hidden outlets. "At least," I said to my husband from the passenger seat on the way back home, "they are each a week older now."

We returned home to a front porch of packages: silver spoons and crystal picture frames and gorgeous dresses that were, to our miserable new mammal, entirely unusable. Previously I had considered gift-giving as an exquisite form of Southern hospitality; but in my delirium I was starting to understand baby gifts as tiny apologies from people who felt sorry for us. My husband beat the cardboard boxes into our recycling can. I quivered over my thank-you notes.

Month four arrived and she was still shrieking in the night. Sometimes she

woke her brother, who called out into the darkness, "Mommy! Wheels!" I was unable to attend story hour at the public library read by the man with a monotone. I skipped the Musikgarten class that I had paid for. I was too busy living out the human condition. Cavewomen had no need for a 3-month-size smock. And neither did I.

I now looked at the other moms in the parking lot a little more closely. Did they have spit-up all over their blouses?

"We were wet," one mom confided, "for seven months."

How, I asked a young woman who was in a book club I had attended in another lifetime, do you get a cute picture to post on Instagram?

"You take a video," she said matter-of-factly, "and take a screen-shot of the one second when she's smiling." I could have broken her with my grateful hug.

Month five rolled around and I was still not, as the Bump.com site suggested I should be, "enjoying my baby." Exasperated, I booked a plane ticket to New York to visit some friends. This break was something I deserved, something I needed, something that would be, I told myself as I took off my shoes and, thinking of my son, admired the wheels on the conveyor belt, "good for all of us."

In New York, I walked down the city sidewalks at the speed of light — not weighted by my stroller. I sat down (in a clean blouse!) with an old friend outside a charming West Village café. No sooner had we air-kissed and taken a sip of our iced coffees than a firetruck sounded on the next block. To my friend's bewilderment, I craned my neck to see it.

"Firetruck!" I said, as the shiny red engine came into view. And then, unable to stop myself: "Here it comes!" She laughed, unsure why this was remarkable. "They don't have those in North Carolina?" Next, a mom came into the coffee shop wearing a little baby-backpack.

"How old is she?" I cooed. I listened with rabbit ears to her answer. I nodded with kindness. "I have two!" It seemed imperative to me that she know. I realized that the tiny noises and smells and chores I had tried to escape were now calling me home. I was thankful to be on the sunrise flight home.

My sweet girl — whose colic is long gone — is finally bonnet-ready. When I tie the bow under her double chin she grins like the Cheshire cat. Strolling around the neighborhood in the sunshine, I catch myself enjoying my baby. We peer at each other, still knowing so little about each other except this: There's fire behind her façade; and being a Southern mother will require so much more than tying her bow.

Caroline Hamilton Langerman has written for many publications, including Town & Country *and* The New York Times. *She is an essay specialist at the Charlotte Latin School.*

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Amazing Gracie

A motorcycle and the open road helped social worker Paula Ackermann find the way to serenity – and changed her life

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW SHERMAN

By Dana Sachs

One day in 2012, Paula Ackermann walked out onto the road in front of her house and climbed onto the seat of the 2009 Suzuki TU 250X motorcycle that she'd just bought on eBay. Then, she took off.

Well, "took off" isn't exactly the right way to put it. "I puttered off," Paula tells me, laughing, over lunch one day at Foxes Boxes, a bright and stylish new eatery on North Fourth Street. "I knew nothing about bikes – how to push them, or anything." But she'd completed a motorcycle safety course at Cape Fear Community College, so she was ready to try. That first day, Paula limited herself to loops around her neighborhood, but even that abbreviated run hooked her on the sport. "It was blissful," she says.

Paula had long dreamed of learning to drive a motorcycle, but it took a tragedy to convince her to do it. A month earlier, Paula's brother had died, and his death made her consider her future in an entirely new light. "It was that whole 'fragility of life' thing," she says. "You don't know what will happen next, so I want to do the things that I care about."

In conversation, Paula is soft-spoken and thoughtful, and she has a deep, melodious voice that, in her career as a social worker, probably serves as a soothing asset. As a mental health professional, she easily makes the connection between finding a passion – in her case, cool motorcycles – and surviving trauma. It wasn't that motorcycles saved her, but that the sport gave her a new source of solace and joy. "I have to have a passion, and the hardest times in my life have been when I don't know what that is." Driving the open roads, she discovered, affected her like meditation, providing "a way of letting go of everything (I've) been thinking about. It's like peace and freedom wrapped up in a sensory experience." Soon after that first cruise around the neighborhood, she was exploring the world on two wheels.

Paula named that original Suzuki 250 Gracie, because "she was my grace." Over time, her stable increased with two additional bikes, both Triumph Bonnevilles – Sophie, a 2013 T-100, and Sadie, built in 1971. (Sadie actually appeared in the film *The Choice*, which, Paula says, "is about the only thing

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that would make me watch a Nicholas Sparks movie.") It turns out that many women find similar pleasure in riding motorcycles. In Wilmington, Paula says, "I probably know 40 women riders."

There's an irony, she admits, in "doing something that's perceived as dangerous and finding it life-changing." And she doesn't dismiss the risks associated with motorcycles, either. Before getting on a bike, she dons boots, a jacket, gloves, thick jeans and, of course, a helmet. She obeys traffic laws, never consumes more than a single alcoholic beverage if she's riding, and adheres to the biker's mantra: Assume that car drivers don't see you. "You're invisible," Paula says, "so you have to make choices based on that."

Since that first ride five years ago, Paula has become a leader in the community of motorcycle hobbyists here in southeastern North Carolina. In 2015, she organized Wilmington's first Distinguished Gentleman's Ride, an international event that takes place every September and raises money to support prostate cancer research and men's mental health. Paula also founded the Cape Fear Kick Down, a motorcycle show and swap meet that launched last year at Satellite Bar and Lounge on Greenfield Street. "The goal is about community," explains Paula, who measures the event's success not only by the number of bikes on display (hundreds) or the range of styles (vintage bikes, classic choppers and modern retro), or the amount of beer sold (a lot), but also by the crowds of people engaged in bike-related conversation. In other words, it thrilled her to hear, "Oh, do you have that fender? I need that one!"

It seems fitting to talk about life changes and discovering new passions while eating lunch at Foxes Boxes, a restaurant that provides on-the-job training to people entering the workforce from marginalized communities. The menu mixes healthy fresh fare with beloved comfort food, often uniting both in a single dish. The straightforward, simple Bacon, Egg, and Cheese Waffle Stack, for example, tastes as hearty as an Egg McMuffin but doesn't leave you worrying about artificial ingredients. We also tried the Chicken with Brie and Pear Chutney, a grilled split breast covered in a layer of melted cheese and chunky preserved fruit. To Paula, the mix of sweet and salty were "not really my flavors." As someone who smears jam on a turkey sandwich, however, I loved it. While I concentrated on the chicken, Paula picked up a roasted green bean, snapped it in half with her teeth and declared, "nice and crunchy, not overcooked."

Paula did not arrive at Foxes Boxes on the back of Gracie, Sophie or Sadie. Earlier this year, she began suffering from severe vertigo, which led to a diagnosis of Meniere's disease. The dizziness associated with the condition has restricted her ability to ride a motorcycle long distances, and she often takes a car in situations when she might previously have ridden. "You can't ignore what's happened or pretend it didn't happen. You have to go through it," she tells me, but she firmly rejects the notion that we lack control over our own lives. "I don't believe that 'everything happens for a reason,'" she says. "We have a lot more power than that idea gives us credit for. We create our own story."

As it turns out, motorcycles remain central to Paula's story, even if she's not taking long rides these days. After her diagnosis, Paula worried that her health issues would prevent her from organizing the second annual Cape Fear Kick Down. "I'm not running at my full capacity and couldn't ramrod it," she explains. As it turned out, her fellow bikers were there when she needed them. After Paula disclosed her situation, people who had helped out last year came forward to take on extra responsibility to ensure the event's success. Paula still managed to participate, but she could do so at her own "new speed."

These days, Paula continues to ride motorcycles when she feels up to it. As for the future, she approaches it with an equanimity that might stem, in part, from her love of new discoveries. "I'm not tied to doing one thing for the rest of my life," she tells me. "I wouldn't like that."

The Foxes Boxes is located in the Brooklyn Arts District at 622 North Fourth St. For more information, visit thefoxesboxes.com, or call (910) 769-0125.

Dana Sachs's latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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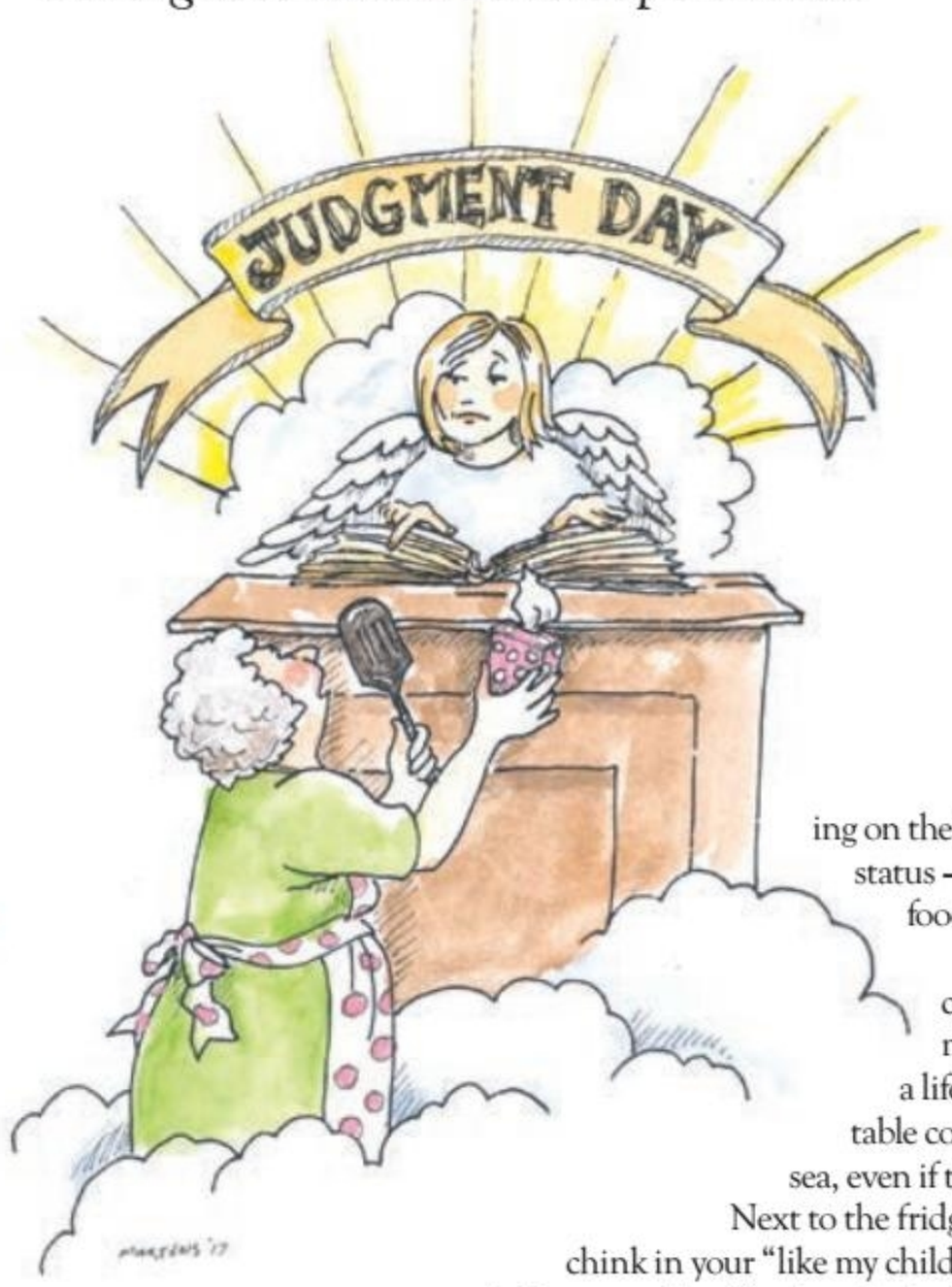

By Susan Kelly

A friend called me in a panic. "Sally is bringing her boyfriend home for the weekend. Tell me what to do. You do this all the time." Having older and more children than my friend, I did have significant experience with Significant Other visits. But I'm here to tell you: You never get used to them.

I trace my trauma to visits to my mother-in-law. It's one thing to have stacks of *Southern Living* magazines on the den window seat. In 1981, it was quite another to have stacks of *Southern Living* from 1966, and 1969, and 1971 in your den. *Who does that?* (My husband's decades-long calming chant to me — "You have got to stop being incredulous" — began about then, and is a particularly helpful mantra if you have sons.)

But back to significant other visits. You know that Bible verse: Judge not lest ye be judged? Well, hello girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse. Hello, judgment day.

Understand that your kitchen is a veritable minefield. My personal greatest slovenly/discovery fear is the refrigerator produce bin. Celery limp as yarn, parsley gone to mulch, unidentifiable runnels of pale yellow liquid at the bottom — few vows can withstand produce gross-out. Wrestle bin from runners, and scour. Pitch anything in Tupperware or tinfoil, lest the SO become curious and unearth leftovers — like I once did — that resemble the dog's dinner. This cannot be unseen.

When it comes to meals, breakfast is the most delicate issue. Setting a table for breakfast? Too weird. People want coffee at different times, drift to the kitchen at different times. They want a newspaper, they want a run, they want their social media. Stock the larder, stack the cereals and utensils attractively on the counter, and leave a DIY note. Eliminates the fret for all those *Do I set the alarm, appear fully dressed and perky, spatula in hand?* concerns. Besides, depending on the SO age — and therefore their likely hangover status — the lovebirds will decamp for the closest fast-food biscuit joint.

Note: If the SO claims to be something complicated like vegan or gluten free, commence subtle bust-up procedures. You're in for a lifetime of culinary misery, never mind boring table conversations. There are plenty of fish in the sea, even if the SO won't eat them.

Next to the fridge, the bathroom is the most vulnerable chink in your "like my child, please like me" armor. So sit on the guest bathroom toilet. You heard what I said. Stare at the walls and cabinets. Get to those scuff marks and thumbprints you see, because she'll be staring at them too. For the shower, go ahead and sacrifice the Moulton Brown products you stole from the Eseeola or Umstead and ditch the Dial. Dig your thumb into the scrubby. Glimpse any brown? Replace instantly. Snip stray strands from towels evolving to strings. Iron the sheet, but you can get away with just the counterpane. Make bed, then start all over upon realizing the monogram is inside out. Spray with scented sheet spray, a *must* for significant other hostessing. Cover pillow drool with pillow covers, then add the regular pillow case, making sure zippers go in first so she doesn't scrape her fingers when she shifts at night, and in case her mother taught her to do the same thing, and she checks on you. (Like I once did.)

Provide Kleenex. Do not make her take off her mascara with toilet paper. She will never, ever forget. (Like I never have.)

Make sure that the significant other's significant other is as equally represented in framed photographs around the house as your other children.

Note: If SO is male, slash all effort by 50 percent.

In retrospect, the above can be summed up by (another of) my mother's edicts: Spend a night in your own spare/empty nest/guest room now and then. Flaws will be self-evident. Alas, however, what's relegated to history are the folded bills she used to stuff into my palm when I visited anyone: Money For The Maid.

Me.

Susan Kelly is a blithe spirit, author of several novels, and proud new grandmother.

ILLUSTRATION BY MERIDITH MARTENS

Zombie

Quick history on a walking dead classic

By Tony Cross

In my selfish quest to explore the myriad rums out there — drink the myriad rums out there — I've actually figured out a way to tie it into October with a brief history lesson on the Zombie cocktail and its original 1934 recipe. There have been many different specs for this drink, and many bartenders (myself included) have built and served it incorrectly. That's all changed now, thanks to one man, and his never-ending search for the earliest recipe.

I first read about Jeff "Beachbum" Berry years ago when my newfound love for rum began. His recipes were in *Imbibe* magazine, and I'd seen his name pop up in references from other bartenders across the U.S. Berry graduated from UCLA film school but, after minimal success, found himself committing full time to bartending and uncovering lost recipes from the early to mid-1900s. He's opened a bar, Latitude 29 in New Orleans, and written a handful of books with extensive coverage on beach drinks. And if that's not enough to make you break out in a hula, he recently developed an app for your phone, Total Tiki, that makes cocktailing easier, especially when you're on the fly.

Berry's search for the authentic, original Zombie recipe began with the man responsible for its creation, Ernest Raymond Beaumont-Gantt, otherwise known as Donn Beach. In 1934, Beach opened up Don the Beachcomber's in Hollywood. The tiki craze began. All of Beach's creations were the real deal: fresh juices, intricate syrups, and different rums. Fifty-plus years later, Berry was having quite the time hunting down the Zombie ingredients. Apparently, Beach kept his creations a close secret, and it seemed next to impossible for Berry to unearth the original specs.

Beachbumberry.com recalls:

"In 1994 the Beachbum began a quest to track down Donn's original Zombie recipe. Ten years and several blind alleys later, he was still none the wiser. But then the gods finally took pity on him. In 2005 their messenger, in the form of Jennifer Santiago, appeared with the drink recipe notebook that her father, Dick, had kept in a shirt pocket during his 15 years at Don The Beachcomber's. Several of the notebook's recipes had been reworked, renamed, or cut altogether from the Beachcomber's menu by 1940 — proving that Dick's notebook dated from the 1930s, possibly 1937, the year he was hired. Which meant that the notebook's Zombie could very well be the original 1934 version.

"O cruel Fate! But there, on the last page of the notebook, scribbled in Dick's own hand, was a recipe for New Don's Mix: two parts grapefruit juice to one part . . . Spices #4? Another code name!

"Bowed but not broken, the Bum asked Mike Buhen of the venerable Tiki-Ti bar if he'd ever heard of Spices #4. Since Mike's dad, Ray, was one of the original Beachcomber's bartenders in 1934, if anyone knew, Mike would. 'Ray would go to the Astra Company out in Inglewood to pick up #2 and #4,' Mike told the Bum. 'A chemist would open a safe, take out the ingredients, and twirl some knobs in a big mixing machine, filling up a case while Ray waited. Then they'd close up the secret stuff in the safe. Ray took the bottles — marked only #2 and #4 — back to Don The Beachcomber's.' All well and good, but what did #4 taste like? 'I have no idea,' Mike shrugged. 'Astra was owned by a guy named John Lancaster, who died of cancer in the '60s. The company's long-gone.'

"And so the original Zombie Punch recipe sat, Sphinx-like, the solution to its riddle so close we could almost, well, taste it. Months went by. A year went by. And then the Bum made the acquaintance of a veteran Tiki bartender named Bob Esmino. Did *he* know what #4 was? 'Oh, sure, from

PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY CROSS

John's old company,' chuckled Bob, who hadn't thought about the stuff in 40 years. 'It was a cinnamon syrup.'"

Berry used to say that he'd never serve his guests more than two of his prized prescriptions at a time. That's marketing at its finest, true or not. Though there's more than one way to create this cocktail (Total Tiki has six different recipes that range from the 1930s to 2007), I'll leave you with the original. You'll see that a few of these rums are hard to obtain locally. May I suggest ordering online? As for glassware, there's always cocktailkingdom.com. More recently, I stumbled upon a shop in Oregon that creates unique and beautiful tiki mugs: munktiki.com. The Zombie is a high-test treat; imbibe responsibly, and be even more careful if you're playing host. Playing babysitter shouldn't have to be a prereq in your party syllabus.

Zombie

1 1/2 ounces Gold Puerto Rican Rum (I use Bacardi 8, flavors of tropical fruit and spice)

1 1/2 ounces Gold or Dark Jamaican Rum (I use my trusty Smith & Cross. That being said, Smith & Cross is Navy Strength, clocking in with a 57 percent ABV. I use 1/2 ounce. Otherwise, I'd use Appleton Estate Reserve.)

1 ounce Lemon Hart 151-proof Demerara Rum (distilled in Guyana, this big boy is a must-have ingredient for this cocktail; flavors of vanilla, caramel, and dried fruits)

1/2 ounce Falernum (a syrupy, very low-proof liqueur with flavors of clove, lime,and almond)

3/4 ounce fresh lime juice

1/2 ounce Don's Mix (two parts white grapefruit juice and one part cinnamon syrup*)

1 teaspoon grenadine (Rose's Grenadine is not grenadine, it's corn syrup — Google it)

6 drops pernod or absinthe (I opt for the latter)

1 dash Angostura Bitters

3/4 cup crushed ice

*Cinnamon syrup: Create a simple syrup (equal parts water and sugar) and add 10 ounces of syrup to a blender along with 8 grams of cinnamon sticks. Blend on high for 20 seconds. Pour into a container, sealing it, and leaving in the fridge over night. The next day, fine-strain out bits of cinnamon. Keep refrigerated.

Blend all ingredients for 3-5 seconds. Pour into a tall glass (again, very cool Zombie chimney glasses that Berry created are available online), and add ice if needed. Garnish with mint. Put on a "Cramps" record, and go to town.

Tony Cross is a bartender who runs cocktail catering company Reverie Cocktails *in Southern Pines.*

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Stranger in the Rain

And payment with a song

By Bill Thompson

Sometimes I struggle to make sure I live in a real world out here in the country.

A couple of days ago I was coming back from a friend's house after a really bad thunderstorm. My friend, Jeremy, lives down one of the few dirt roads left around here, and the rain had made the roadbed slick in some places and boggy in others, so I was driving carefully. I could hear the mud slapping on the door of my pickup truck, so I was driving very slowly so as not to make it look like I was a refugee from one of the frequent mud races held down in the Green Swamp. (Of course, nobody would suspect my old pickup of participating in such an event.)

It was a good thing I was driving so slowly because just a short distance in front of me I saw a gaggle of geese crossing the road. They were not in a straight line, just sorta wandering in a group with no evident leadership. I stopped in the middle of the road and waited for the six geese to cross. They didn't seem to care whether I was there or not, and they didn't seem to be in any kind of hurry.

The geese waddled on across the road and the little shallow ditch and proceeded on into a cut-over field. The heavy rain of the storm had caused water to puddle in several areas of the field, and the geese settled down into the shallow pools.

The drizzling remnant of the storm was blurring my vision of the geese, so I rolled the window down to see them better and turned off the engine. What a peaceful scene. No noise, not even the soft breeze moved the dripping leaves of the sweet gum trees.

I sensed more than heard the sound come from behind me. It was the sound of small, uneven splashing. I turned to look through the back window of the truck and saw a man on a bicycle coming up beside my truck. He was soaking wet. He wore no hat. His only attire was a T-shirt and a pair of jeans and flip-flops on his feet. He had a banjo case in the basket of his bicycle and a small pack tied behind the seat. He stopped beside me and asked, "Hey, buddy, you goin' into town?"

I started to give him a sarcastic reply, "No, I thought I'd just stay out here in the middle of this muddy road till somebody misses me." But I didn't. I told him I was, indeed, going that way.

"How 'bout givin' me a ride then? I'm 'bout give out peddlin' through this mud."

I told him to put his bicycle in the back of the truck and get in. He took his banjo out of the basket and, with one swift motion, threw the bicycle into the back of the truck. The crash of the bicycle startled the geese and they took off with a great honking noise into the drizzling rain.

"Whatcha doin' out here in this mess?" I asked.

"I been down to the beach and a fella told me this road was a short-cut to Whiteville. I believe he lied."

"You not from around here, I take it?"

"Nope. Originally from Louisiana but I got friends all over. Travel around to see 'em and play a little banjo music. Got a cousin in Whiteville; that's why I'm headed there."

The passenger smelled like sweat and beer. He evidently hadn't shaved in a couple of days. His long hair hung like a used mop as the water dripped down his body and onto the truck seat. I had a lot of questions to ask this curious wanderer, but we were back in Hallsboro in just a few minutes. As we pulled up beside the old Pierce and Company store, he said, "You can just let me out here. I'll call my cousin to come and get me."

I let him out and he said, "Thanks for the ride." He reached to get his bicycle out of the back of the truck when he suddenly came back to the door and said, "Hey, can you wait just a minute. I'll be right back."

Before I could reply he rushed into the store. I waited just a few minutes because he left his bicycle in the truck. He did quickly emerge from the store and got back in the truck. "She'll (his cousin) be here in a few minutes. Listen, I ain't got no money to pay you for the ride, but I would like to do something for ya. How 'bout I play somethin' for you on my banjo?"

Before I could answer he took his banjo out of the case and began to play. I didn't recognize the song but he was a pretty good banjo player.

He played a couple of songs. Then he said, "Well, that's about it." He put his banjo back in the case, got his bicycle out of the back of the truck and waved at me as he said, "You take care now, ya hear," as he walked over to the loading dock of a warehouse. He never told me his name.

Bill Thompson is a regular Salt *contributor. His newest novel,* Chasing Jubal, *a coming of age story in the 1950s Blue Ridge, is available where books are sold.*

Celebrating Samhain with the Bordens

From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggity teenagers in Mr. T costumes, oh Lord, please deliver us

By Jane Borden

On October 31 — the night between summer and winter, the midpoint between the autumnal equinox and winter solstice — the barrier between the realms of the living and the dead grows thin and flimsy. Spirits sneak through.

Or so believed the Celts and their Druid priest class, who lived more than 2,000 years ago in what is now Ireland, northern France and the U.K. To appease the spirits, and secure health and safety through the coming winter, the Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain. Eventually, Samhain traveled through the lenses of the Romans, the Catholic Church, and the American consumer, and became Halloween.

Based on my childhood memories of Halloween in the 1980s, though, Samhain is still alive and well in Greensboro. Here are five eery similarities between my family's celebrations and those of the ancient Celts. Either nothing ever really changes, or my parents were Druids. You decide.

CROP DESTRUCTION

Spirits are tricksy. The Celts believed that the dead crossed into the realm of the living with a purpose: to wreak havoc on crops.

One year, my dad grew pumpkins in our backyard. Rather, he grew pumpkin. His crop yielded one, which we carved in time for Halloween. But when we rose on November 1 — hours after the spirits returned to their world and the barrier closed again — we found our pumpkin in pieces, smashed and left on the sidewalk. My eldest sister, Lou, cried. But Dad was like, "Well, it's a pumpkin." Spoken like a man accustomed to giving the dead their due.

APPEASING THE SPIRITS

These other-world residents not only destroyed crops, according to the Celts, but came to engage in all manner of nefarious shenanigans. As an insurance policy for themselves and their belongings, Celts tried to keep the spirits happy.

I remember seeing some marauding specters firsthand. They terrorized Country Club Drive, moving on foot in small groups. Fearsome were their Tretorn sneakers and homemade Mr T costumes! Lo, how they sprayed shaving cream on foliage! My gods, what happens to boys in puberty?!

One year, a group of these teen ghosts chased us on the golf course. They bullied many children that year — and even stole trick-or-treating candy. There is no greater sin than taking candy from a child princess. Only an evil spirit (or adolescent male) could execute such an atrocity. Mom was prepared to call the cops. But then one of the victims recognized one of the perpetrators, a football player at Aycock, at which point we begged Mom not to turn them in. Come to think of it, maybe instead of a Celtic community, I just grew up in a patriarchy.

AVOIDING POSSESSION

Another way to keep spirits out of your body: disguises. The Celts wore cos-

ILLUSTRATION BY MERIDITH MARTENS

tumes on Samhain to throw off the spirits. Some historical accounts depict the Celts in animal skins and furs. Others have the Celts wearing white and painting their faces black.

My sisters and I often wore the same costumes, as a result of their being handed down. We especially remember a little Dutch girl costume, which had been brought home from a visit to Holland by my mom's uncle Britt. It was worn not only by my sisters and me, but also by my mom and her sister. I now realize how dangerous this was. What ghost would see a Dutch girl five times — in Greensboro, N.C. — and not recognize her? And not think, "Huh, that Dutch girl hasn't aged in 35 years. I better check it out by possessing her." Being dead doesn't make you dumb.

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

Divination was among the Druids' primary jobs. The priests were especially busy on Samhain. Celts believed the future could be more easily accessed on the night the living mingled with the dead. On Samhain, even regular Celts went around telling each other's fortunes, as part of the fun.

Similarly, one of my family's friends made a keen prediction one Halloween night. Every year, Dad took us on the same trick-or-treating tour, stopping by the homes of a handful of family members and friends, including that of Louise Miller, my preschool teacher (and my sisters') at First Presbyterian Church.

One year, Mrs. Miller pulled up in a taxi just as we arrived. My parents can't remember the details exactly. She suddenly realized that she'd either left her pocketbook at the airport or at the hospital. Regardless, she didn't have keys to her apartment or a wallet, and upon realizing as much, had directed the driver to continue taking her home anyway. So Dad paid the driver and drove Louise to retrieve her purse. My sister Tucker remembers that when Louise got out of the taxi, she said to Dad, "I told the driver you'd be here, you always come." Dad paid the driver and drove Louise to retrieve her purse.

SACRIFICES

Whether to appease the gods or the spirits, ritual sacrifices were a common Celtic practice. On Samhain, the Druids burned crops. During war, they slashed throats and, some believe, cannibalized the victims ceremoniously. Anything would be given over, if it made the gods happy.

Similarly, most of our Halloween candy mysteriously disappeared every November 2nd. But in our case, the gods lived in a trashcan. So, maybe my parents weren't Druids after all. Maybe they just worshipped raccoons.

Jane Borden now lives in Los Angeles, where, hopefully, her daughter will wear the Dutch girl costume on a Halloween soon.

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Red-Breasted Merganser

The distinctive duck that loves our winter coast

By Susan Campbell

A day at the beach is not when one expects to see ducks. However, in the winter months it is not unusual to see at least one species of waterfowl paddling around just beyond the breakers. A large duck, the red-breasted merganser is not hard to find if you scan the water any day from mid-October through early March. In fact, thousands of these birds spend the cooler months along our coast every year. Spend a few hours ocean-watching and you are likely to see not only resting birds on the water but also flocks of red-breasteds passing by as they move between feeding areas.

Red-breasteds are one of three species of merganser that occur in North Carolina at some point during the year. Common mergansers, which are actually far less numerous, are more likely inland. Hooded mergansers, the smallest of the three, are not often found in saltwater either. Mergansers are all piscivorous divers that have long, thin bills lined with many sharp teeth that are ideal for grabbing fast-moving, slippery prey. This group of waterfowl also have strong legs that are situated far back on the body, enabling them to dive quickly and easily when they spot schools of small fish, crustaceans or insect larvae.

Male and female red-breasteds look very different during the breeding season. But when males arrive here they are still sporting dull, eclipse plumage. For the most part they look like females. Both have a red bill, red legs and feet, and a shaggy double crest of long brown feathers. The back, rump and flanks are a dull gray, which is excellent camouflage against the water. In flight, there are flashes of white from the belly plumage in addition to white in the wing. Red-breasted mergansers have long, tapered wings that are pale underneath. But distinct patches of white feathers are noticeable on the wing's dorsal surface. Females have a patch on top of the trailing edge of the wing very close to the body. But the white on top of a male's wing will flash much more brightly, since it extends the full width. The wing pattern does not change over the course of the year.

In November it will become more obvious which birds are males. Although it may seem early, they, like all waterfowl, will acquire fresh new breeding plumage. They will replace the dull body plumage that they have worn since breeding ended in early July. Their heads will become an iridescent green, and their eyes will become bright red. And it is then that they develop their namesake reddish-brown breast that includes bold black speckling. With the transformation complete, they can begin the task of acquiring a mate they will travel back north with come spring.

Over the winter months, male red-breasteds seek out potential mates. Courtship in mergansers involves elaborate posturing and head-shaking by males who repeatedly circle the object of their affection. Males swim around receptive females trying to out-do one another with repeated head tilts and bowing. It is a very lucky thing to witness this dance. If you keep an eye out as you walk the beach this winter, you may spot these wonderful creatures and be treated to quite a show!

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos at susan@ncaves.com.

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Summer's End

A farewell to an old friend from the trail of life

By Jason Mott

Summer isn't summer without a final road trip. So for my birthday, I threw a fistful of clothes into the trunk of my car, pointed it in a generally westward direction, and decided to let the road and the fates take me to the destination of their choosing.

When the miles had rolled long enough beneath me, I found myself in Virginia. Southwestern Virginia, to be exact. In a small town named Damascus, a town known for an annual event called Trail Daze.

Trail Daze is an annual celebration of hiking and the Appalachian Trail — the 2,000-mile-plus contiguous path that winds its way from Maine to Georgia. Most of the trail exists in the forests and hills of the East Coast of the United States, but occasionally it finds its way through small towns that have sprung up around the trail itself. Damascus is one such town. It's one of the few places on the trail where a person can find white blazes — markers usually placed on trees to let a hiker know that they are on the Appalachian Trail — plastered to the side of telephone poles. It's one of the few places where the 2,000 miles of nature that make up the Appalachian Trail are broken up by the smoke, smog and scramble of humanity.

So there I was, in Damascus, trying to figure out why my road trip had taken me there.

It wasn't my first time in that town. I'd been there over 13 years ago with a friend named Ray. Ray and I met at Cape Fear Community College. We were both nontraditional students — that means "old" — and we wound up working in the library's media center together. It was a typical college work-study job. Rarely did the duties exceed the effort it took to explain to some faculty member which hole to plug the HDMI cable into. Ray and I were from different generations. We weren't dramatically far apart in age, but just far enough to occasionally grate on one another's nerves. But in spite of it all, there was a deep friendship there.

Ray was a hiker, born and bred. It was almost all he talked about. So after we both graduated from CFCC, Ray talked me into taking a couple of weeks and going hiking up on the trail. It was a great experience — far too long to talk about here today — but it left enough of an impression on me that when I wound up in Damascus again this second time, I thought I'd look up my old friend.

While stopping by the town's best-known hiking store, I asked after my buddy, Ray. And, as fate would have it, I found myself talking to his best friend, Lumpy.

"Do you know of a hiker named Otto?" I asked.

(I asked after Otto because that was Ray's trail name. Trail names are a deeply rooted hiker tradition. It's a moniker that a person uses when they're hiking.)

"Otto?" the tall, big-bearded man behind the counter said quickly. "He's dead. Two years now."

Two small sentences. Five powerful words.

There was a moment of shock and disbelief. Even though I hadn't planned on coming to Damascus, as soon as I found myself here I had wanted nothing but to reconnect with my old friend. He wasn't supposed to be dead. I was supposed to run into him and sit around a roaring campfire in the deep hours of the night, the two of us laughing about how far life had taken each of us in the last 13 years. Or, at the very least, I was supposed to find that he was off somewhere having adventures and living well.

But life had other designs.

Ray was the guy who taught me about hiking — something I've come to love almost as much as I love cars. He even gave me my trail name: Sore Thumb. Trail names are a huge deal. You can't just make them up yourself. A more experienced hiker has to name you after you've earned some miles. It's a right of passage, an induction into a little-known, but deeply loving family.

My buddy Otto gave me that family.

And then, in the space of two sentences uttered by a man in a hiking store, he was dead.

And how did he die? Prostate and bone cancer. Just like my dad.

Life is cruel sometimes.

Lumpy, his friend who broke the news to me, was charged with scattering my buddy's ashes. Two years ago he'd scattered most of them along the Appalachian Trail. But he'd also had some put into small — almost comical — plastic mini-footballs because Otto had been a Carolina Panthers fan.

Lumpy just happened to have one of these small urns left. He gave it to me and told me, "After you've spent some time with him, let him go."

Life is generous sometimes.

At the time of this writing, I'm back at home and Otto is still with me. I'll let him go soon, just like Lumpy told me to. But not just yet.

I could talk for another ten thousand words about all of this, but time is short, just like life. This is my final article for *Salt* — it's been a pleasure, by the way.

If my ramblings about cars and life have given you nothing else this summer, Dear Reader, please take this with you: Take care of each other out there on the road of life. Enjoy the twists and turns, and remember to share as much of the ride — or hike — as possible.

— *Sore Thumb*

Jason Mott is a New York Times *best-selling author, a UNCW alumnus and current UNCW writer-in-residence.*

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Foggy Morning on 421

The fog is eating the mountains.
A thick white cloud covers pine trees,
rock faces, and wooden fences.
Then the road disappears,
with its helpful lines and warning signs.
I follow the lights of the car in front of me.

We're part of an unwitting convoy,
inching down a mountain road
in zero visibility.
A runaway truck could hit us from behind
and send us careening off the mountain
or spinning like billiard balls.

This is what it's like to grow old,
creeping along slowly,
losing your vision, memory, and friends,
no familiar landmarks to guide you,
the suspense building as you
wait for a sudden exit.

Karen Filipski

The Gentleman Pirate

The rise and fall of dashing Stede Bonnet – like his infamous mentor Blackbeard – brought to an end the golden age of piracy, but may have scattered the first seeds of democracy

By Kevin Maurer

Pirate captain Stede Bonnet's ship the *Royal James* was leaking and in need of repair.

It was August 1718, and Bonnet had just left Delaware Bay, where he captured two ships. His three-ship fleet was on its way to the Virgin Islands, but there was no way it was going to make it.

It was hurricane season, and Bonnet needed a safe place to make repairs and wait out any storms. Spotting an estuary near the mouth of the Cape Fear River (near modern-day Southport), he ordered his crew to set up a base and careen the *Royal James* to make repairs. Grounding the ship at high tide, the sailors heeled it over and waited for the tide to ebb, exposing the hull below the water line. Prisoners from the captured ships scraped the *Royal James* clean of barnacles and repaired any holes.

A few weeks later, lookouts spotted two sloops aground on a sandbar closer to the mouth of the river. Merchant men who misjudged the tide, Bonnet suspected. Easy prey for his pirate crew.

Bonnet ordered his men to take three canoes and capture the ships. As the pirates approached, they realized the ships weren't merchants. They were British war ships. Pirate hunter Col. William Rhett's 130-man expedition from Charleston, to be exact.

Bonnet had two choices: flee up river, or wait for high tide and escape into the open ocean. Bonnet knew victory would come to the vessel that floated first, and he gambled on his ship. It was a bad decision — one of many — that sealed his fate and led to his capture and death by hanging.

A small historical marker on NC Highway 211 near Bonnet's Creek commemorates the battle but does not do justice to the legend of Stede Bonnet, known as the Gentlemen Pirate. While Beaufort and the Outer Banks lay claim to the most famous pirate of all — Blackbeard — the Cape Fear region is where one of the most eccentric pirates to sail the high seas was captured.

"He is intriguing because he really was a gentleman," says Colin Woodard, author of *The Republic of Pirates*. "Many of the pirates were downtrodden seamen. Bonnet was wellborn and had everything to lose. He had a family. He had an estate. And yet he goes off into piracy."

The Gentlemen Pirate

Bonnet was born in Barbados in 1688, but orphaned soon after his birth. He inherited his family's large sugar plantation and was raised a gentleman. He joined the local militia, earning the rank of major, and married the daughter of a local planter in 1709. They raised three sons and a daughter, but he eventually left them all for the pirate life.

Historians are split on the reason. One theory points to a nagging wife, but David Moore, an archaeologist and historian with the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, doesn't put any stock in it. Another theory is that Bonnet was mentally ill, but Moore has a simpler explanation: money. In 1717, Bonnet borrowed £1,700 ($400,000 today). Moore said Bonnet's financial problems likely came from a drought wiping out his sugar crop.

But Woodard thinks Bonnet became a pirate for political reasons. He was a Jacobite who supported James Stuart as king of England over the German-born King George. Pirates, according to Woodard, were in revolt. "Bonnet was part of this effort to put the Stewarts back on the throne," Woodard says. "That would be a decent explanation."

The true reason is lost to history. What is known is that Bonnet bought a sloop, fitted it with 10 guns and hired a crew of 70 men, whom he paid regular wages instead of splitting the loot like the other pirate captains. Bonnet named the ship *Revenge* and one night slipped out of Barbados.

The Gentlemen Pirate's career started off well. He plundered four ships at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay and took two more near New York City before returning to North Carolina. He captured two more ships off the Carolina coast, stripping one of its timber to repair the *Revenge*.

Bonnet then set a course for the island of New Providence — a pirate sanctuary — in the Bahamas. On the way, he ran across a Spanish warship and mistakenly ordered his crew to attack. The Spanish ship was heavily armed and damaged the *Revenge*, killing or wounding half the crew. Bonnet was wounded in the exchange, but it is unclear how.

"The historical record is murky," Woodard says. "We don't know what injury he had, but it was a serious one. He was bedridden and stuck in his cabin."

With Bonnet in his cabin, his crew was able to outmaneuver the Spanish warship and escape to Nassau. There the pirates welcomed Bonnet's crew, but placed Blackbeard in charge of his ship. The crew had little faith in Bonnet's seamanship. It didn't help that Bonnet would sometimes walk the decks in his nightgown and spent his hours tending to his personal library instead of the ship.

"They were used to dangerous living on the high seas," Moore said of the mariner culture. "[Bonnet] was out of his element. His crew saw it."

Eventually, Blackbeard sent Bonnet to the larger *Queen Anne's Revenge* and appointed his first mate to take over the *Revenge*. While Bonnet was Blackbeard's guest, the pirates laid siege to Charleston harbor and took prizes along the mid-Atlantic coast, using North Carolina as a base.

Moore said the pirates liked North Carolina because of its many inlets. There wasn't a lot of government in the colony either.

"It was easy for them to fence goods," Moore said.

It was also where they could get a pardon from Gov. Charles Eden. King George signed his Act of Grace in 1717, which offered amnesty for any acts of piracy committed after the Queen Anne's War. It extended for one year. When Bonnet found out Blackbeard was going to seek a pardon, he followed. It was clear the life of a pirate wasn't a match for Bonnet.

While in Bath — then the capital of North Carolina — Bonnet found out England had declared war on Spain. He decided to return to his ship, the *Revenge*, and become a privateer — a legal pirate paid to attack Spanish shipping. But when he returned to Beaufort Inlet, where his ship was anchored, Blackbeard was gone. All that was left was Bonnet's empty sloop and 25 members of his crew marooned on a sandbar. Bonnet swore revenge against Blackbeard, and vowed to chase him down.

But Blackbeard had a head start and easily evaded Bonnet, who returned to piracy. He was short on supplies and money, according to his trial transcript.

"They were all running around trying to get a final score before taking a pardon from North Carolina," Woodard says. "Bonnet may have tried to get one more score."

But Bonnet wanted to keep his pardon, so he changed his name to Capt. Thomas and renamed the *Revenge* the *Royal James*. On July 2, 1718, Bonnet captured the merchant sloop *Fortune* off the coast of Delaware Bay. He seized the sloop *Frances* two days later. All three ships sailed into the Cape Fear River that August, where he planned to repair the *Royal James*.

Unlike his first foray into piracy, Bonnet was the captain this time, according to the transcript of his trial. He earned a reputation for abusing his crew — lashing two men as punishment, and threatening prisoners with marooning

if they didn't work. He was allegedly one of the few pirates to make prisoners walk the plank, but historians have their doubts.

Moore said Bonnet obviously learned things from his time with Blackbeard. "He had to become a little better," Moore says. "Just from the experience. He was watching one of the best."

But like Blackbeard, Bonnet was again a wanted man, and South Carolinian pirate hunters were on his trail.

Battle of the Sandbars

News got back to Charleston that a pirate named "Capt. Thomas" was anchored in the Cape Fear River. But South Carolina Gov. Robert Johnson had bigger problems. Pirate Charles Vane, like Blackbeard, attacked Charleston, and Johnson wanted him caught.

Johnson commissioned Col. William Rhett to capture Vane with two Royal Navy sloops, the *Henry* and the *Sea Nymph*. Rhett lost Vane, but decided to investigate reports of pirates in the Cape Fear.

Rhett's flotilla arrived at the mouth of the Cape Fear on the evening of Sept. 26. They spotted Bonnet's three ships and started toward them when both the *Henry* and the *Sea Nymph* ran aground. After scaring the pirate canoes away, Rhett had no choice but to wait for high tide.

Farther up the river, Bonnet waited for the morning tide. At daybreak, he raised his flag and headed toward Rhett's ships. As they approached, the pirates fired cannon and muskets.

Rhett got his ships underway and ordered them to bracket the *Royal James*. As they maneuvered, the *Henry* and *Sea Nymph* both ran aground in the unfamiliar river. Bonnet order his crew to hug the river's western shore to avoid Rhett's ships, but before they could escape, the *Royal James* got caught on a sandbar. Only the *Royal James* and Rhett's flagship — *Henry* — were in range of each another.

Both sides unloaded volleys of musket fire. The *Royal James*' deck was tilted away from the *Henry*, giving the pirates a perch to fire upon the British sailors. The *Henry*'s deck was titled toward the *Royal James*, leaving the British sailors exposed.

"They kept a brisk fire the whole time," Rhett reported according to the trial transcript: "The Pirates . . . beckoned with their hats in derision to our people to come on board them; which they only answered with cheerful Huzza's, and told them it would soon be their turn."

Bonnet marched along the deck waving his pistols around and threatening to kill anyone who refused to fight. He spotted Thomas Nichols, who had just joined the crew, cowering. Bonnet told Nichols that if he didn't fight, he'd blow his brains out. As Bonnet leveled his pistol, a nearby pirate was struck, distracting him, Nichols testified at the trial.

The battle raged for five hours until the tide changed. The *Henry* was freed first. Bonnet could hear the British sailors cheer as they repaired the rigging and closed on the *Royal James*. Rhett's second ship, the *Sea Nymph*, was also freed and sailed toward Bonnet's vessel.

Vastly outnumbered, Bonnet drew two pistols and ordered his gunner, George Ross, to blow up the ship's powder magazine. Ross started toward the magazine as Bonnet threatened to shoot any man that tried to stop him. Before Ross could light the magazine, Bonnet was overruled by the remainder of the crew.

A "flag of truce," according to the trial transcript, was run up the mast, signaling their surrender. Bonnet gave up only after Rhett agreed to negotiate with the governor on his behalf.

Seven pirates lay dead and five were wounded. Ten British sailors were killed and 14 wounded. Rhett stayed in the Cape Fear for a few days to let the wounded recuperate before sailing south. He arrived in Charleston with Bonnet and 34 pirate prisoners on Oct. 3, 1718.

The End

Back in Charleston, Bonnet made one more bid for freedom. He escaped to Sullivan's Island, but was soon recaptured by Rhett. But the bigger news, according to Woodard, was the mob that tried to free Bonnet and his crew. The trial transcripts describe the mob as almost overthrowing the government.

"That suggests Stede Bonnet had some significant rank and file following among the pirates or rank and file supporting pirates," Woodard says.

The support likely came from the fact that Charleston was an economic hub, Woodard says. Goods fenced in the Caribbean often made their way to the city.

"There could be quite a few people with economic, political affiliations with Stede Bonnet," Woodard says.

On Nov. 10, 1718, Bonnet stood trial for two counts of piracy. He defended himself using his high-born background and his time as Blackbeard's prisoner as a defense. But like his pirate career, the trial ended in failure. Bonnet was sentenced to death and hanged a month later at White Point in Charleston. He was executed a few weeks after Blackbeard was killed by the British Royal Navy on the inlet side of Ocracoke Island.

The death of Blackbeard and Stede Bonnet ushered in the end of piracy's golden age. But their lives represent more than just thieves on the water. Woodard argues in his book piracy was a political protest and the first seeds of democracy. Pirate ships weren't run with the captain as God like the Royal Navy or the merchant fleet. Crews voted for their leader, and loot was divided among the crew.

"It shows while they were stealing and breaking the law, that is not really what was going on," Woodard says. "It would be one thing if only the pirates saw themselves in this light, but tons of people took the pirates' point of view. They were Robin Hood's men fighting the good fight against the autocratic transatlantic empires. You had a democratic movement a good 70 years before."

But how does Bonnet fit into that narrative? He was part of the transatlantic system, raised in the upper class of one of Britain's richest colonies. That isn't the portrait of a revolutionary fighting for the common man. He was a one-percenter. His early pirate days are more like a rich guy playing the rebel by dying his hair, buying a leather jacket and riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. It was only when he was left with nothing, duped by Blackbeard, that Bonnet finally became a pirate.

Not a good pirate, but a gentlemen pirate.

Kevin Maurer is an award-winning journalist and best selling co-author of No Easy Day, *a firsthand account of the raid to kill Osama bin Laden. His next book,* American Radical, *will be out in October.*

Resting in Peace

The burying grounds and graveyards of the Cape Fear region are places of incomparable beauty and serenity

Story and Photographs
by Virginia Holman

In October, it's fun to think of old graveyards as eerie places, frequented by restless spirits and unsettling Edward Goreyesque characters. Yet the graveyards and cemeteries in the Cape Fear region aren't simply a stop on the old Wilmington ghost tours, they are complex as any community, and archives of our past. Here are three sites among the many in our area well worth visiting.

Oakdale Cemetery (1852)

Although many people visit Oakdale Cemetery for its history and beauty, others are also drawn by its haunting tales. Two of the most visited gravesites are for those who are remembered for their strange departures. The tragic end of Nancy Adams Martin seems torn from the pages of a story by Edgar Allan Poe, and haunts many visitors. In 1857, she perished while on a long shipping voyage with her father (the captain) and her brother. Days from a nearby port, her brother and father decided to preserve her body in one of the large casks of whiskey they had onboard. In order to prevent damage to her remains, they tied her body upright in a chair and affixed it inside an empty cask. They then filled and sealed the cask with the spirits. Rather than return home, Capt. Martin decided to continue his voyage, a decision that multiplied his grief. Four months after Nancy's death, his son was swept from the deck during a terrific storm, never to be seen again. Upon Capt. Martin's return to Wilmington, Nancy was buried as she was preserved. A large pit was dug, and the entire cask was buried. A small crooked cross that reads "Nance" marks her gravesite, and a plain white obelisk memorializes the loss of the siblings at sea.

Another point of interest is the grave of William Ellerbrock, a German immigrant, local riverboat captain and volunteer fireman, who was rarely seen without his stalwart dog, Boss. When a raging warehouse fire erupted at Front and Dock streets, workers rushed out, but young Capt. Ellerbrock ran inside the building. Local storytellers say that the crowd heard Ellerbrock cry out for help, but the brutal heat overcame his would-be rescuers before they could enter the building. When Boss heard the cries of his companion, he raced in to help. Both perished in the inferno; their remains were located a mere 10 feet from the doorway. Boss was found beside the captain, a scrap of cloth from Ellerbrock's coat clutched in his teeth. The two are buried together, and a carving of Boss on the back of Capt. Ellerbrock's obelisk with the inscription "faithful unto death" memorializes the inseparable duo's valor.

Across the river in Southport, two cemeteries, Old Smithville Burying Grounds and the John N. Smith Cemetery, are neighbors separated by less than a mile. Each harbors notable members of the community and its own fascinating stories.

The Old Smithville Burying Grounds (1790s)

The final resting place for more than 1,200 souls sits on two acres of high ground not far from the river. The cemetery was founded in the 1790s, a time when Southport was known as Smithville. It's a peaceful place to visit, shaded beneath live oaks and ancient magnolias. Some of the headstones appear blank, their inscriptions erased by time. Other monuments have shifted and lean at strange angles to accommodate the massive tree roots that vein the ground.

One of the more intriguing residents of the Old Burying Grounds is Capt. L. C. "Crattie" Arnold. He was born in 1883. As a young child, he contracted spinal meningitis, and the disease rendered his legs withered and useless. At age 7, his family had his legs surgically removed. They were then buried in the family plot with a stone that read "His Legs." Crattie went on to lead a productive life as a husband, father and master boat builder. He passed away in 1967. A headstone in the cemetery bears his name; sadly, the marker for his legs can no longer be found.

The John N. Smith Cemetery (1880)

Just around the corner on East Leonard Street, the John N. Smith Cemetery (named after in the first man buried there, in 1874) is one of our state's treasures. This cemetery was founded in 1880 by a local African-American church. Smithville Cemetery, like many private Southern cemeteries at the time, refused to bury black community members. (In fact, North Carolina did not prohibit cemeteries from discriminating on the basis of race until 1975.) This peaceful, well-tended historic site is shaded by burled live oaks with sprawling canopies — some of the most magnificent trees in our region, and several headstones are decorated with small mounds of seashells and knobbed whelks, an African tradition maintained by the Gullahs. The shells honor the belief that "the sea made us; and the sea shall take us back." This graveyard is the final resting place of the many notable African-American citizens of Southport. Its graves include two Civil War veterans as well as local business owners and educators.

The cemetery fell into a state of disrepair in the 1950s, but in recent years a group of local citizens, led by Judy Gordon, has come together to protect and restore this splendid site. (Gordon's grandfather, Frank Gordon, was the first African-American educator in Brunswick County and is buried here.) The cemetery still has numerous unmarked graves, and efforts are underway to use ground-penetrating radar to help find and mark those graves lost to time. A nonprofit group was formed to help maintain this important historic site, and a grant from the Orton Foundation helped the group install a fence around the 3 1/2-acre site.

Due to these efforts, the welcome sign at the John N. Smith Cemetery is now rendered in the same elegant blue-painted script as the Smithville Cemetery. It highlights the resting place of one of Southport's most famous citizens, Elias Gore, a 7-foot, 11-inch-tall local menhaden fisherman affectionately nicknamed "Nehi." He was known to be a gentle giant who worked so hard that he earned the wages of two men. For a brief time, he modeled clothing for a company in New York, but soon returned to his hometown where he could be a family man and not just a curiosity. He's remembered fondly to this day as a man who loved children, and who helped send his brothers and sisters to school.

For more information:
Oakdale Cemetery: oakdalecemetery.org
Old Smithville Burying Grounds: southporthistoricalsociety.org
John N. Smith Cemetery: johnnsmithcemetery.org

Virginia Holman is a regular Salt *contributor and teaches in the creative writing department at UNCW.*

Being Harry Truman

Clifton Daniel, Harry Truman's grandson, brings his famous grandpa alive

By Gwenyfar Rohler

Clifton Truman Daniel was surprised the first time someone told him he looked like his grandfather, President Harry Truman.

"It only started happening just in the last five years," he notes. "I suppose it's just age. I finally look older."

Harry Truman rose to national prominence in his 60s when he became FDR's vice president and subsequently the president of the United States. Maybe turning 60 himself is part of what has inspired Daniel's latest project: starring in Samuel Gallu's one man show *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* at the Ruth and Bucky Stein Studio Theatre in Thalian Hall. The show premiered in 1975 starring James Whitmore, and a film of the performance was released the same year. Daniel remembers seeing the film of Whitmore's portrayal of his grandfather as an in-flight movie when he was 19. "The flight attendant told my mother they were showing *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* back in steerage, and my mother said, 'Oh no, I've already seen it.'" But young Clifton hadn't. He made his way back and grabbed an empty seat. Whitmore was playing the public face of President Truman, but nonetheless, Daniel commented, "There were a couple of times I saw Grandpa."

A few years after seeing the film, Daniel moved to Wilmington where a lot of disparate strands of his life started to come together for him. From 1983

until 1998, Daniel worked at the *Star-News* by day and haunted Thalian Hall by night. "I basically wasted a lot of time in New York waiting tables and going to acting classes," Daniel recalls. "Everything sort of started at the *Star-News* – I did not know how to type!" His father, E. Clifton Daniel Jr., former managing editor of *The New York Times*, arranged for him to start an internship here.

"The first time I took on an assignment, I knew sort of instinctively about how to write a news story. How to shape it, what to include. I think it was because I had the managing editor of *The New York Times* correcting my homework for years." At the same time, Dino De Laurentiis was building a movie studio on 23rd Street, and the movie business was growing. Along with it, live theater blossomed: "I went from play to play. That was what I did in the evenings. I'd be the lead in one and in the back holding a broom in the next one." What these two passions share is a talent for storytelling and engaging with an audience. Daniel has a palpable warmth that builds connection almost instantly, whether he is talking to a room full of people or is on a private phone call. Maybe it is not such a surprise that he tells a good story; clearly, it is a family trait. Not only was his father an acclaimed newspaper man, but his mother, Margaret Truman Daniel, published several books about her famous parents, and the history of the White House.

Daniel himself published a memoir about his grandfather, *Growing Up With My Grandfather: Memories of Harry S. Truman*. Though he is more interested in talking about the books of letters between his grandparents, *Dear Harry, Love Bess: Bess Truman's Letters to Harry Truman, 1919–1944*, Daniel points out that the Truman Library has more than 1,300 letters that Bess wrote to Harry. "About half of those were collected into a book in the '80s," he explains. But there are far fewer of his letters to her. Apparently the story goes that Harry came home one day and found her burning his letters to her. When asked what she was doing, she calmly replied that she had already read them. "But think of history!" he pleaded. "Oh, I have," she responded.

"At the Truman Library we only have about 184 of her letters left, and they turned out weirdly to make a fairly linear progression of the two-decade runup to being vice president and president," Daniel notes. "During the '20s and early '30s they wrote back and forth when he was at National Guard Training Camp . . . I enjoyed that. It was my grandmother as a young woman."

Perhaps one of Daniel's best-known stage performances during his tenure in Wilmington was as Salieri in Opera House Theatre Company's production of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*. Tony Rivenbark, executive director of Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, played Mozart. "We still get together whenever we can," Rivenbark notes. "He and his wife, Polly, and I had a chance to catch up with one another last year when I was in Chicago . . . That's when we discussed the possibility of bringing *Give 'Em Hell, Harry!* to Thalian Hall." The themes of the show resonate strongly with Rivenbark.

"Harry S. Truman was the last U.S. president to preside over 48 states and the only truly 'people's president' we've ever had," Rivenbark opines. "After all, he was an ordinary American citizen who wound up being called upon to do extraordinary things. For instance, just as North Korea dominates our headlines today, more than 70 years ago, President Truman was dealing with the Korean War."

"He was a rare human being – he wasn't perfect," Daniel acknowledges. "He believed in a level playing field, he was straightforward, he was honest. He had a good sense of humor."

Preparing to play him onstage has been an interesting exercise in scholarship for Daniel. As he is already actively involved with the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, where he serves as honorary chairman of the board of trustees, the script of *Give 'Em Hell, Harry!* has challenged him in unexpected ways. "I find that I can't learn the script without dissecting it," Daniel explains. "It was written 40 years ago. Some of the scholarship has changed. I find that when I read a passage I have five or six big books next to me in the living room with me, just to look a little deeper into what he's saying." The biographies are fascinating, but they don't necessarily agree about the details. "It's probably slowing me down because I have to sit there and dissect everything." But, he notes, each performer has a different focal point for a character. For him it is about his grandfather's sense of humor and love of people.

"I give speeches about my grandfather – and I wind up sort of imitating him because there are stories to tell," Daniel explains. "But the hardest part for me is that Missouri accent of his. My accent certainly isn't. I have couple of hours of tapes from the Truman Library of him speaking." Daniel points out that his inflection and tone sounded very different in private life than in his public addresses. What he remembers is Grandpa grousing at him and taking away his toy gun when he was shooting pop cans off the coffee table. It's a little different than the president of the United States on a news reel or television explaining why he is nationalizing the railroads or dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

> "I never gave anybody hell! I just told the truth and they thought it was hell."
> – Harry Truman

"Tony Rivenbark told me I had to start gaining weight," he chuckles. "But I got a pair of round glasses with my prescription in them, so I don't wind up falling into someone's lap. I'm messing with haircuts and some sort of drastic hair dye . . ." he trails off for a moment. Then he adds, "It's going to be great to be back. I haven't been back to Wilmington in almost 20 years. It seems like when Tony and I are on stage together it's always some long play and I have to learn all the lines!"

Give 'Em Hell, Harry! will run from Oct. 12 to 22 at the Ruth and Bucky Stein Studio Theatre at Thalian Hall. For more information and show times: (910) 632-2285 or thalianhall.org.

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

The Whale House

On Bald Head Island, a home worthy of Captain Ahab's quest

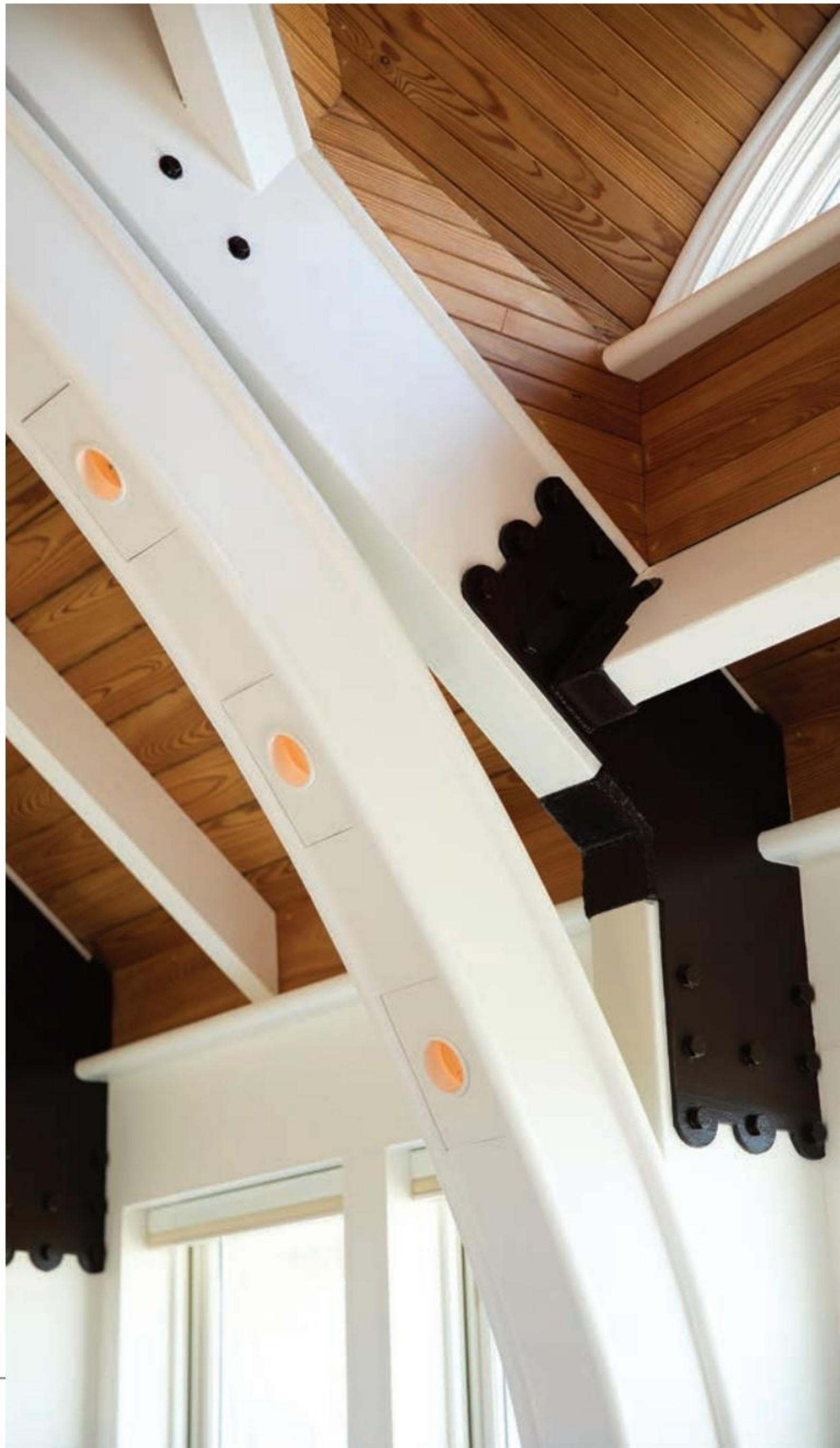
By William Irvine · Photographs by Andrew Sherman

Herman Melville, the celebrated American author of the 19th century, was a complex and romantic writer. He worked as a common sailor on a merchant ship, which later informed his masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*, the storied fable of Captain Ahab's quest for the great white whale.

And it was *Moby-Dick* that served as the guiding metaphor for Wilmington architect Chuck Dietsche, who was approached by clients on Bald Head Island to build a house they would fancifully call Castello della Balena (Castle of the Whale), but which is known today by locals as the Whale House. It's currently the most expensive house listed for sale in North Carolina, with a whale of a price: The dune-top house with unparalleled 270-degree views can be yours for a mere $11.99 million.

When the couple first met Dietsche in 2005, they had purchased two adjoining oceanfront lots and had not decided whether to build a house on one and sell the other. Dietsche presented them with two different plans: The first showed a house on one lot with the other empty; the second one showed a house on two lots that stretched along the ridge of the dune, all of its rooms with ocean views. They instantly became enamored with the idea of combining the lots to create a sizable 2.6 acres.

To call the site spectacular does not do it justice: At 44 feet above sea level, it's at the southernmost



tip of Bald Head Island at Cape Fear Point, with panoramic vistas of both East and South beaches and the Frying Pan Shoals. It is also one of the few places in North Carolina (or on the East Coast, for that matter) where you can enjoy both sunrise and sunset views.

But Dietsche was not about to build his clients a McMansion. "The most important thing about the house is the site," he says. "It's such a prominent place on the island. Bald Head has an aesthetic that is defined by smaller houses with lesser impact — quality over quantity, and I tried to honor that."

So while the house is large at 5,500 square feet, with three bedroom suites and a separate guesthouse, the scale is not overpowering and is low enough to be unobtrusive — people driving by still have a clear view of the ocean. And the façade is punctuated by breezeways and outdoor porches, giving it an unexpected lightness. "We tried to make the base as open as we could," says Dietsche. "When you go upstairs you also get the lightness of the large windows and the ocean views."

The main level of the house is where the *Moby-Dick* part kicks in: The house resembles a whale's body stretched along the dune ridge, if you can envision the kitchen at the head and the garage wing at its tail. The primary living space resembles the whale's interior skeletal structure, with steel beams covered in composite wood. The custom-designed arches in the living room resemble a large, stylish rib cage, with cast-iron chandeliers about comfortable flanking sofas and a massive walk-in fireplace. Beyond is the dining room, which features custom-designed buffet cabinets depicting the sun and moon that separate it from a semicircular kitchen, with a large island for seating and demilune counters. There is a large screened porch facing the ocean for seasonal dining.

One of the most remarkable features of the Whale House is the custom work throughout — there are many built-ins, all with beautiful details. Doors feature Craftsman-style iron hinges and cabinetry. Did Dietsche design these himself or was the client involved? "We designed a lot of

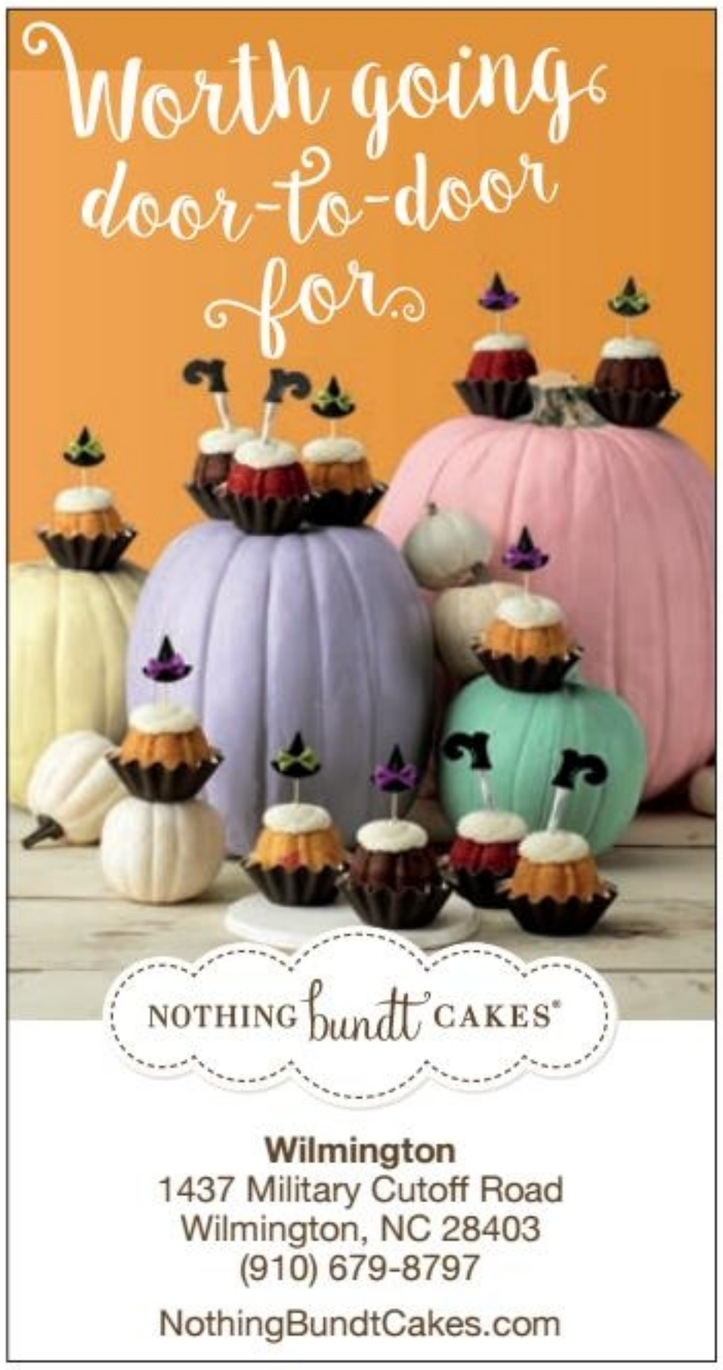
these things together," he says. "The husband was very creative and had lots of kooky design ideas that we liked to brainstorm about. He was kind of an architect manqué. Unfortunately, he died during construction, so his wife, who is also a very artistic and crafty — as in crafts — person, worked hard to make it as joyful as it could be. They were very responsive people."

Off the public spaces on the main level is a separate master bedroom suite, which features a floating island of a built-in bed and custom closets with stained-glass and glass panels. The only way to reach this room is through a secret door (a library bookcase), which can only be unlocked by pulling out the binding of a copy of *Moby-Dick* that rests on the top shelf. The private spaces of the house are on the lower level, consisting of an enfilade of three en-suite bedrooms, each with a distinctive and private outdoor porch facing the ocean.

Next to the house via breezeway is a detached freestanding tower that the architect calls the crofter house: "It comes from Celtic Scots-Irish tenant farmer culture," says Dietsche. "It's a distinctly Bald Head terminology — an island-wide term for a guest-house." The downstairs serves as storage and a garage, and the upstairs contains an office and a guest bedroom and bath with magnificent ocean views. It originally served as the wife's studio. "She used this as her beading room and completed many crafts projects here," says Dietsche. The most stunning feature of the crofter house can be reached through a door in the ceiling: a widow's walk with enough outdoor seating for 10 people and a wet bar — an idyllic place to gather for sunset cocktails and admire the view. It's probably the loveliest spot in the Whale House.

"They were realists, but romantic people," says Dietsche. "I was able to help them express their exuberance for life in this house. I think we achieved that."

William Irvine is the senior editor of Salt. *His latest book,* Do Geese See God?: A Palindrome Anthology, *is available on Amazon.*



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ALMANAC

October

There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October.

–Nathaniel Hawthorne

By Ash Alder

It happens in October. The morning is charged with autumnal magic, and ancient memories of the circus awaken in our bones.

A yellow spider descends from the porch rafter like an aerial silk dancer, and a crow pivots round on the wrought iron rail between the fence pickets. In the garden, feathery muhly grass whispers a simple incantation, and winter squash and warty goblins embody the weird and the wonderful. The world is a carnival of texture and color, and spirited creatures remind us of stilt walkers and acrobats and mystical sideshows.

The spider ascends.

Inside, red and golden spirals fall away with each smooth crank of the apple peeler, and the dog-eared pages of the family cookbook mark applesauce; apple dumplings, crisp and tart; great aunt Linda's brown butter apple loaf.

The crow caws madly in the garden, calls us back to the front porch, where sunlight dances in the spider's web. She's spun a message: *You, too, are the magician.*

The Stinking Rose

In ancient Greece, brides carried bouquets of garlic in lieu of flowers. In ancient Egypt, it was fed those who built the Great Pyramids. In addition to warding off vampires and evil spirits, garlic does wonders for sautéed turnip, beet and mustard greens. Break bulbs into cloves and plant them before the first hard freeze. Although it won't be ready for harvest until next June, growing your own garlic means you'll be well equipped for cold (and collard) season next fall. And wedding season, of course.

The sweet calm sunshine
of October, now
Warms the low spot;
upon its grassy mold
The purple oak-leaf falls;
the birchen bough
Drops its bright spoil like
arrow-heads of gold.

–William Cullen Bryant

Brain Candy & Ivy People

In the spirit of Halloween, tricks and treats:

· Weighing in at over 2,600 pounds, the largest pumpkin ever measured was grown by a farmer named Mathias Wellemijns, who wheeled the monster from his home in Belgium to the Giant Pumpkin European Championship in Germany last year to take top prize.

· Master illusionist Harry Houdini, one of the greatest magicians who ever lived, mysteriously died on Halloween night in 1926. Among his first tricks: picking the lock on his mother's cupboard to retrieve her fresh-baked apple pies.

· Egyptian farmers swaddled wooden figures with nets to create the first "scarecrows" in recorded history. Only they weren't scarecrows, per se. They were used to keep quail from the wheat fields along the Nile River.

· During the pre-Halloween celebration of Samhain, a Gaelic festival that marks the end of harvest season, bonfires were lit to ensure the return of the sun. Druid priests offered bones of cattle to the flames. "Bone fire" became "bonfire."

· The Full Hunters Moon rises just after sunset on Thursday, October 5 — a prelude to Mad Hatter's Day on Friday, October 6. "Why is a raven like a writing desk?" Ponder this and other riddles over tea in the garden — top hat optional.

· The ancient Celts looked to the trees for knowledge and wisdom. According to Celtic tree astrology, those born from September 30 – October 27 associate with ivy, an evergreen vine is known for its ability to cling and bind. Ivy people are charming and charismatic, but their compassion, fierce loyalty to others and ability to flourish against all odds is what sets them apart from other signs of the zodiac. Ivy people are most attracted to ash (February 19–March 17) and oak (June 10–July 7) signs.

Arts Calendar

10/11

Airlie Gardens Bird Walk

10/21

Oktoberfest at Ogden Tap Room

10/26-28

Trick or Treat Under the Sea

10/3 Sphinx Virtuosi
7:30 p.m. Eighteen of the nation's top classical soloists come together to put on a night of music you won't forget. From baroque to modern music, the program highlights styles for every ear. Admission: $20–50. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/arts.

10/6 NC State Capitol Oyster Roast
7 p.m. – 11 p.m. Head down the road to Raleigh for an oyster roast and fundraiser for the North Carolina State Capitol Foundation, which helps preserve our state capitol. Admission: $75. 1 E. Edenton St., Raleigh. Info: www. ncstatecapitol.org.

10/6-8 Juried Art Show & Sale
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Annual Art in the Arboretum show and sale featuring local talent and an exhibit of copper frogs by local sculptor Andy Cobb. Admission: $5. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 297-7283 or www.wilmington-art.org.

10/7 Run for the Ta Tas
7:30 a.m. – 10 a.m. A 5K chaser race and one-mile fun run to raise awareness for breast cancer with proceeds benefiting The Pink Ribbon Project, Love is Bald, and Going Beyond the Pink, presented by the Bobby Brandon Real Estate Team. Registration prices available online. Mayfaire Town Center, 925 Town Center Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.its-go-time.com/run-for-the-ta-tas.

10/7 & 8 Wilmington Riverfest
9:30 a.m. A celebration of Wilmington's heritage in historic downtown Wilmington including local vendors, live entertainment, food, beverages and family-friendly activities. Admission: Free. 2 Water St., Wilmington. Info: www.wilmington-riverfest.com.

10/11 Airlie Gardens Bird Walk
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. A monthly outdoor bird walk along the beautiful grounds of Airlie Gardens featuring some of the area's most diverse landscapes, presented by Wild Bird & Garden. Admission: $3–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdandgardeninc.com.

10/12-22 Give 'Em Hell, Harry!
7:30 p.m. (Thursday - Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). A live one-man performance highlighting the life of our 33rd president, Harry Truman, who will be portrayed on-stage by his grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel. Admission: $38. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

10/13 With Love, Marilyn
7:30 p.m. A new musical paying tribute to the legacy of Marilyn Monroe, going behind the scenes of her personal struggles with fame, both public and private. Admission: $22–40. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

10/13-15 EyeCon Return to Tree Hill
A fan convention to celebrate the locally filmed series *One Tree Hill*, featuring Q&A's with the cast, autograph and photo opportunities, discussion panels, and more. Admission: Prices available on website. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt St., Wilmington. Info: www.eyeconfla.com.

10/14 Fire in the Pines Festival
10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. An outdoor, environmental education event highlighting the importance of controlled fire burns and wildlife protection. Includes an appearance by Smokey Bear, forest animals and birds, activities with various environmental organizations, fire truck tours, live music, and more. Admission: Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5000 or www.fireinthepines.org.

10/14 & 15 Pleasure Island Seafood, Blues & Jazz Festival
10 a.m. Annual outdoor festival celebrating local seafood and live music, complete with two musical stages and a crafter's village. Band line-up available online. Admission: $50–60. Fort Fisher State Recreational Area, 1000 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

10/15 Wilmington Wedding Expo
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The first annual Wilmington Wedding Expo, presented by WWAY News in partnership with Camille's of Wilmington and Ironclad Brewery, features an array of florists, photographers, caterers and everything else you need to make your day special. Admission: Free. Ironclad Brewery, 115 N. Second St.,

Wilmington. Info: (910) 524-8822 or www.wilmingtonweddingexpo.com.

10/15 Art with Heart Fundraiser

3 p.m. – 6 p.m. An art auction, silent auction and raffle presented by New Hope Clinic to benefit their efforts to provide medical and dental services to the low-income residents of Brunswick County. Hors d'oeuvres and wine included with admission. Admission: $20. Southport Community Center, 223 E. Bay St., Southport. Info: (910) 457-6769 or www.newhopeclinicfree.org.

10/15 Boogie in the Park Concert

5 p.m. – 7 p.m. An outdoor concert in Kure Beach featuring classic rock, funk, and soul by the band Sonic Spectrum. Bring your lawn chair or blanket. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Ave., Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

10/18-20 Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity's 30th Anniversary

To celebrate the Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity's 30th Anniversary, the organization is building a house in 30 hours (nonstop) for a mother and her 7-year-old son to begin on Oct. 19 and finish on Oct. 20. Volunteers welcome. Kick-off event is Oct. 18. Admission: Free. 2500 Oakley Road, Castle Hayne. Info: www.capefearhabitat.org.

10/19 Ranky Tanky

7:30 p.m. The Charleston-based quintet performs timeless music of Gullah culture, a blend of West African and southeastern U.S. cultures. Admission: $15–40. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.uncw.edu/arts.

10/20 Toast to Life Gala

6 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. The third annual fundraising event for the Muscular Dystrophy Association to raise awareness and support of individuals with muscular dystrophy. Admission: $150 per individual. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 N. Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-3114 or www.wilmingtontoasttolife.com.

10/21 Oktoberfest at Ogden Tap Room

11 a.m. – 11 p.m. Annual Oktoberfest celebration featuring live music from the Harbor Townfest Band, German beers and brats, bounce houses for kids, and the wiener dog races. Admission: Free. Ogden Tap Room, 7324 Market St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 821-8185 or www.ogdentaproom.com.

10/21 Harvest Arts Fest

1 p.m. – 5 p.m. The Co-op lawn at Tidal Creek will be transformed into a pop-up market featuring 20+ local artists, live entertainment, and a silent auction. Proceeds from the silent auction will go toward a water filtration machine for DREAMS Center for Arts Education. Admission: Free. Tidal Creek Co-op, 5329 Oleander Drive, Suite 100, Wilmington. Info: (910) 799-2667 or www.tidalcreek.coop.

10/21 Wilmington Music Festival

7:30 p.m. An enchanting evening of classical music at Thalian Hall featuring world-class artists and several renowned special guests. Full lineup is available on website. Admission: $25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.wilmingtonmusicfestival.org.

10/21 & 22 Topsail Festival

7:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Saturday); 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Sunday). Celebrate the beauty of the autumn season in Topsail Beach with their annual fall arts and entertainment festival. The fun includes live music, food, a juried art show and more. Admission: $5–8. Children under 11 and active military admitted free. The Historical Assembly Building, 720 Channel Blvd., Topsail Beach. Info: (910) 599-6214 or www.autumnwithtopsail.com.

10/21 & 22 NC Oyster Festival

9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Sunday). Celebrate the beginning of oyster season with Ocean Isle Beach's annual oyster festival, featuring food, drinks, live entertainment and family-friendly activities. Admission: $5 (adults); free (children under 12). 8 E. Second St., Ocean Isle Beach. Info: (910) 754-6644 or www.ncoysterfestival.com.

10/24 Batty Battleship's Halloween Bash

5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. A family-friendly Halloween event on the USS North Carolina including a trick-or-treating event, games, activities, henna tattoos, and storytelling. Costumes encouraged. Admission: $5. Kids under 3 admitted free. Battleship North Carolina, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

10/26-28 Trick or Treat Under the Sea

4:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. A family-friendly event presented by the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, featuring trick-or-treating, face painting, storytelling and other kids' activities. Admission: $11. North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8257 or www.ncaquariums.com.

10/27 Fourth Friday

6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

10/27 Voracious Rare Beer Festival

6 p.m. – 9 p.m. Annual beer festival on the USS North Carolina, featuring live music and limited release beers and appetizers from over 30 breweries. Admission: $30–75. Battleship North Carolina, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-8622 or www.lighthousebeerandwine.com.

10/28 Christians, Cancer & Christ

9 a.m. – 2 p.m. The third annual spiritual workshop designed to help cancer survivors, featuring guest speakers, grief counseling, and more. Coloring book donations are appreciated and will benefit the UNC Children's Hospital in Chapel Hill. Admission: Free. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, 719 Walnut St., Wilmington. Info: (678) 887-1871.

10/28 Lighthouse Beer & Wine Festival

1 p.m. – 5 p.m. The 16th annual Lighthouse Beer & Wine Festival showcasing more than 100 breweries and wineries including samplings, live music, food trucks and taxis to transport you to and from the event. A portion of proceeds benefit the Carousel Center. Admission: $15–55. N. Waterfront Park, 11 Harnett St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-8622 or www.lighthousebeerandwine.com.

10/28 Cape Fear Heart Walk

9 a.m. Annual non-competitive 5K walk presented by the American Heart Association with proceeds helping the fight against heart disease. Registration prices available on website. McNeill Hall Lawn at UNCW, 601 S. College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-9270.

10/28-29 HomeFest

11:00 a.m. – 4 p.m. A family-friendly event presented by the Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association, featuring home tours, a street fair, trail race, Kids' Zone, live music, and more. Admission: Free. Compass Pointe, 8178 Compass Pointe East Wynd Northeast, Leland. Info: www.wilmingtonhomefest.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Wrightsville Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Tuesday Wine Tasting

6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29

S. Front St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday — Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 S. Fifth Ave. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday — Ogden Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more. Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Wednesday — Poplar Grove Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 N., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Wednesday — T'ai Chi at CAM
12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday — Weekly Exhibition Tours
1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

Wednesday — Wednesday Echo
7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Palm Room, 11 E. Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

Thursday — Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday — Paranormal Ghost Tours
6–10 p.m. Three spooky ghost tours each Friday each hour on the hour at Poplar Grove Plantation. Come visit the phantoms that have haunted Poplar Grove for years. Admission: $15. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 N., Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/festivals/paranormalghosttours.

Friday & Saturday — Dinner Theatre
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents August Wilson's TheaTerror and Macabaret. Admission: $18–42. TheatreNOW, 19 S. 10th St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3now or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Sunday — Historic Downtown Wilmington Artisan Market
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. A weekly artisan market in downtown Wilmington featuring local art, jewelry, and other handmade items by more than 30 rotating artists. Riverfront Park, N. Water St., Wilmington. Info: (910) 232-2309 or go to our Facebook page.

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

ARTS & CULTURE

ART EXHIBIT

"ExperiMetal: An Artist's Journey by Gale Smith"

Exhibit: October 6-28th, 2017

Opening Reception: Oct 6th, 6-8pm

"Rhapsody in Blue"
woven & painted copper, 20.5" x 22.5"

Artist, Gale Smith

"Solstice Sky"
woven, painted copper w/copper wire, 31" x 42"

The artist transforms metal into contemporary art and combines painting, weaving and sculpting resulting in colorful, textured wall hangings that take on radically new tapestries and shapes.

Art in Bloom GALLERY
210 Princess St • Wilmington, NC
www.aibgallery.com

22nd Annual
Art in the Arboretum

Featuring
Andy Cobb's Ribbit Exhibit

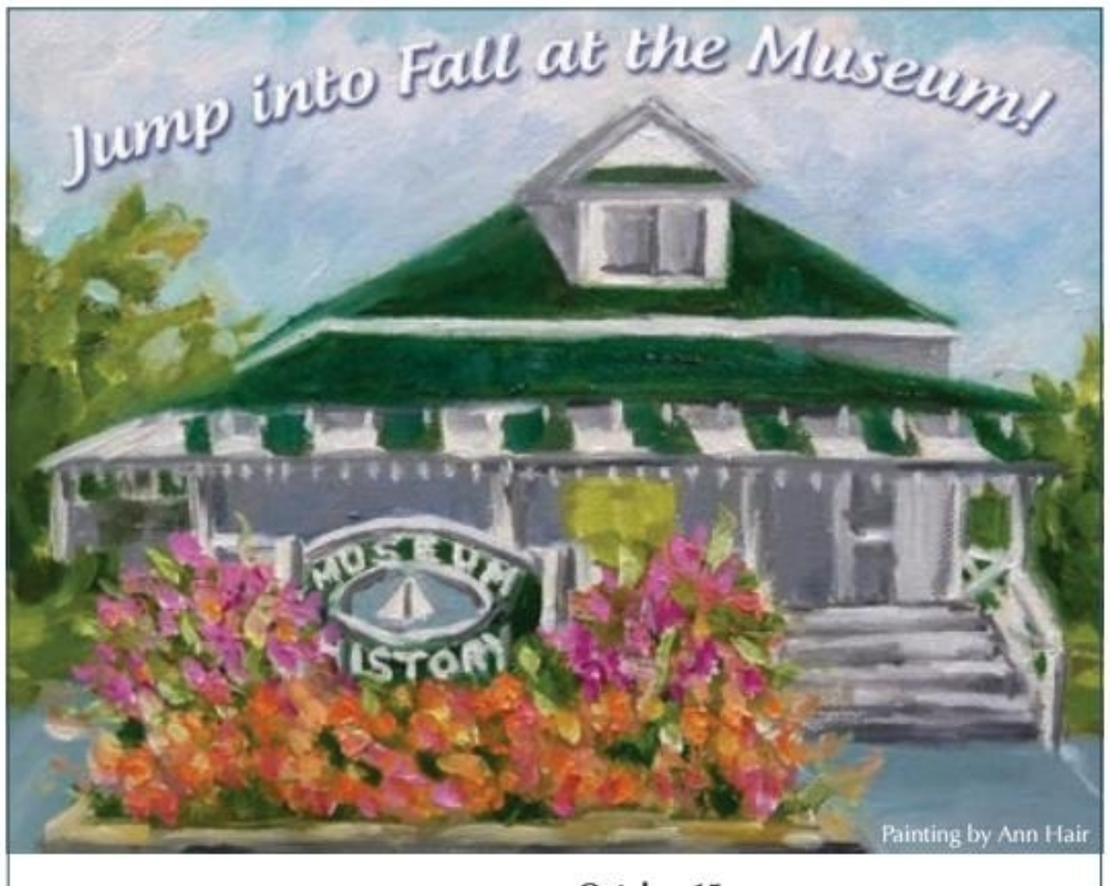
Art in the arboretum
NEW HANOVER COUNTY

ART SHOW AND SALE

Friday, 10/6 - Sunday, 10/8
10am - 4pm

$5 Admission
Free for Active Military, FOA Members & Kids under 12

6206 Oleander Drive
Wilmington NC



Painting by Ann Hair

Join us in these festive community celebrations!

October 1-28
Raffle of Ann Hair plein air painting of the museum. Drawing at Wet Paint Sale.

October 1
Book Signing and Book Launch program for new, enlarged 10th Anniversary Edition of Wrightsville Beach: The Luminous Island. Special book launch pricing. Light refreshments. 4pm

October 15
4th Annual Waterman Hall of Fame Induction and Celebration at Blockade Runner. Photo presentation and silent auction. Remembrance of fallen watermen. 1-4PM.

October 26-28
Wrightsville Beach Museum Paint Out. Artists will paint Wrightsville Beach landscapes to sell Saturday, October 28 at the Wet Paint Sale, 4-6PM at the museum. Light refreshments.

November 23-26
Loop Through History - 25 historical trivia and vintage photo signs along The Loop.

303 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480
910-256-2569 | wbmuseum@bizec.rr.com | www.wbmuseumofhistory.com

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Charles Jones African Art

African Art & Modern Art
Works by Edouard Duval Carrie, Jim Dine, Orozco and Others

Painting by Jose Bedia, 2013
Moba clan figure, Northern Ghana
Bakwele currency, Congo

Monday-Friday
10am-12:30pm &
1:30pm-4pm

weekends
by appointment

appraisal services available

311 Judges Rd. 6 E | 910.794.3060
charlesjonesafricanart.com
cjafricanart@icloud.com

carolina artisan
craft market
November 10 - 12, 2017
Raleigh Convention Center, Exhibit Hall C
Day Ticket, $7 online or $10 at the door
Weekend Pass, $13; Children under 15, Free
Jewelry | Pottery | Sculpture | Glass
Wood | Fiber Arts | Photography
Metal | Furniture | Printmaking
Mixed Media | Basketry | Leather
CarolinaArtisanCraft.com
Office of raleigh arts | COMMISSION
This program is funded in part by the City of Raleigh based on recommendation of the Raleigh Arts Commission.
Artwork by: (Clockwise) Sandra McEwen, Joseph Sand, Minh Martin, Beth Andrews, Jake Johnson

Introducing the Shake

Have you heard what's shaking?

Let *Salt* magazine's new blog, The Shake, give you the local lowdown through fun and meaningful stories, and as many bizarre and interesting little tidbits as we can find!

The Shake is replete with regional tales, bios, events and home, garden, and health tips. Stay Salt-y by checking in as often as you can.

www.saltmagazinenc.com/the-shake
#getsalty
#readwhatsshakin

SALT SERVICES

Port City People

Total Eclipse of the Art

Eclipse Artisan Boutique

Monday, August 21, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Pam Patton, Carol Wormwood

Melanie Heinrich, Justine Ferrari

Janet B. Sessoms

Carol & Jim Curley

Ed Hearn, Marty Allran

Libby, Clementine & Angela Bossut

Keith Patterson

Figi & Marty Goldsteine

Bess Butterworth

Matt Carvin, Mary Ann Masucci, Kevin Blackburn

Theresa Morgan, Brooklyn Chirico

Sallon & Emily Savino

Port City People

Last Chance for White Pants Gala

Audi Cape Fear

Saturday, August 26, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

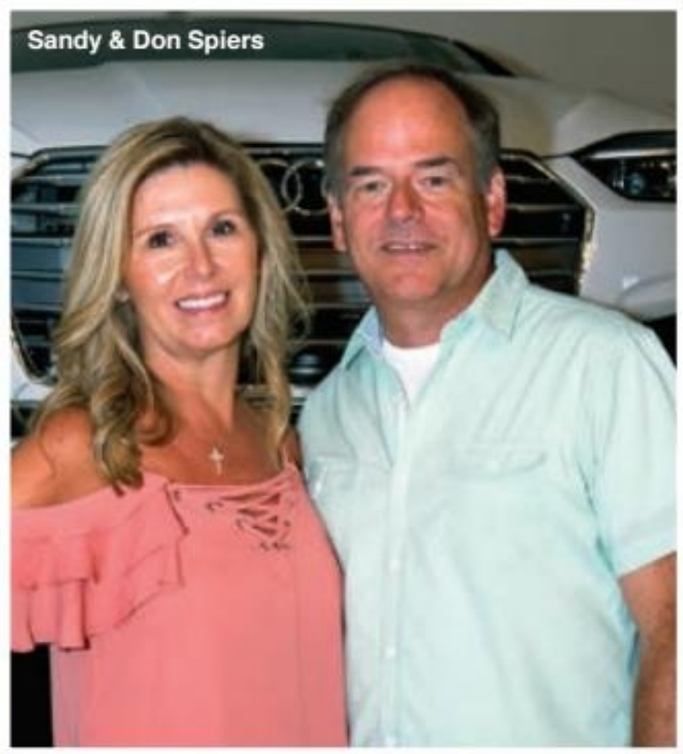
Sheila & Jon Evans

Nicole Johnson, Rob Hunoval

Charlie Godwin, Frank Potter, Susan & Clayton Gsell

Christian Rhue, Jessica Combs, Helen & Chris Carlton

Christian & Patti Riddle


Sandy & Don Spiers

Catherine Blankenship, Robert Hickman, Fern Bugg

Chris & Sandy Hutchens, Michelle Clark, Buddy Green

Lisa Weeks, Sharon Laney, Sandy Spiers, Angie Ball

Doug Lewis, Kathy Gresham, Frank Potter, Jimmy Hopkins

Elle Wood, Cathey Luna, Dana Fisher, Ashley Miller

Cornelia & Sean Ruttkay

Port City People

Lumina Daze

Blockade Runner Resort
Wrightsville Beach

Sunday, August 27, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

The Imitations

Tania Corbi, Michael Voorheis

Candi & Stephen Terry

Sue Copeland, Paul Butler, Susan Metts

Merlee Hill, John Townsend

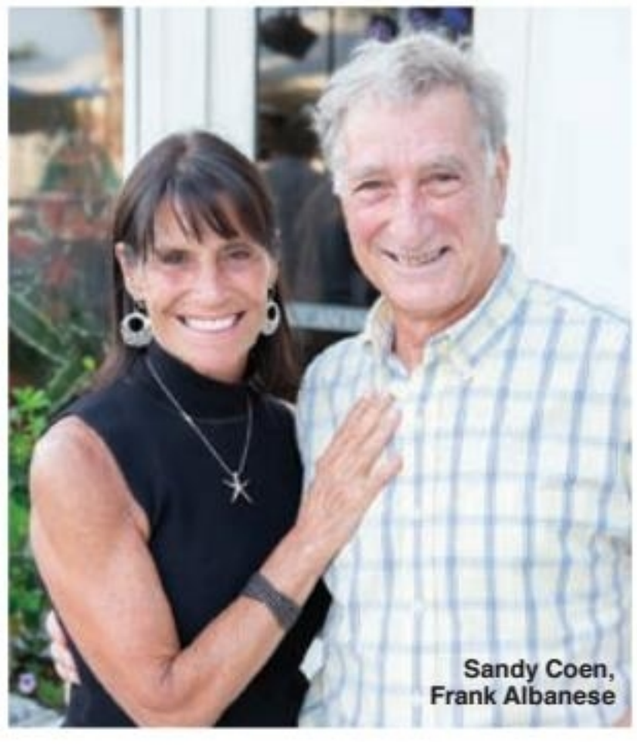
Alyssa Arnold, Ben Phillips

Michelle & Ricky Lewis

Tim & Kathy Hill

Mary Jo Parks, Dr. Lucien Wilkins

Mike Penny, Anne Cunningham


Sandy Coen, Frank Albanese

Kevin & Karla Dolan

Port City People

Wilmington's Epicurean Evening

Benefit for the Methodist Home for Children

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

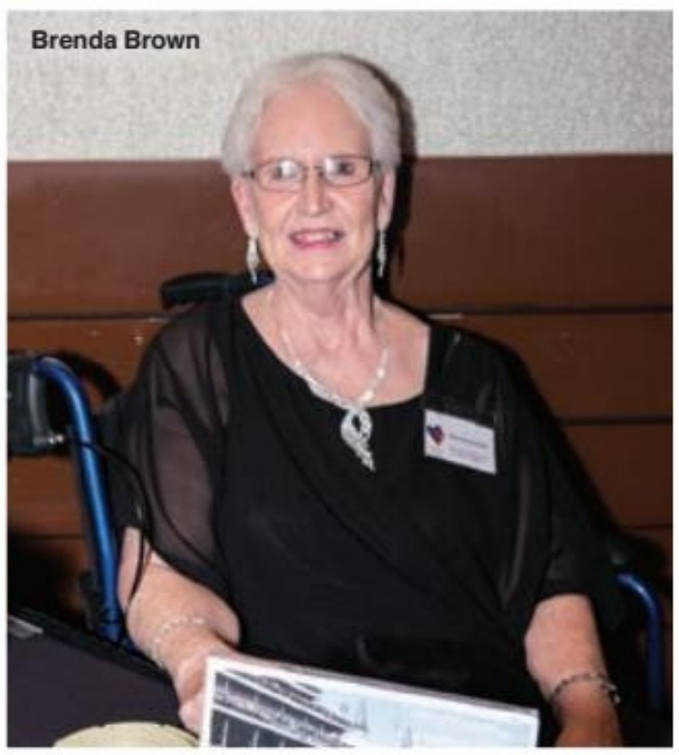
Harrison & Crystal Peebles

Bill & Karen Traina, Tara & Doug Lain

Christina & Jackson Norvell

Melissa & Darrin Scott

Catherine Porter, Hayes, Mikki & Jessi Perry


Brenda Brown

Trish Hatcher, Jim & Annette Flechtner

John Peck, Christina & Jackson Norvell

Michael, Emma & Kate Kowalski

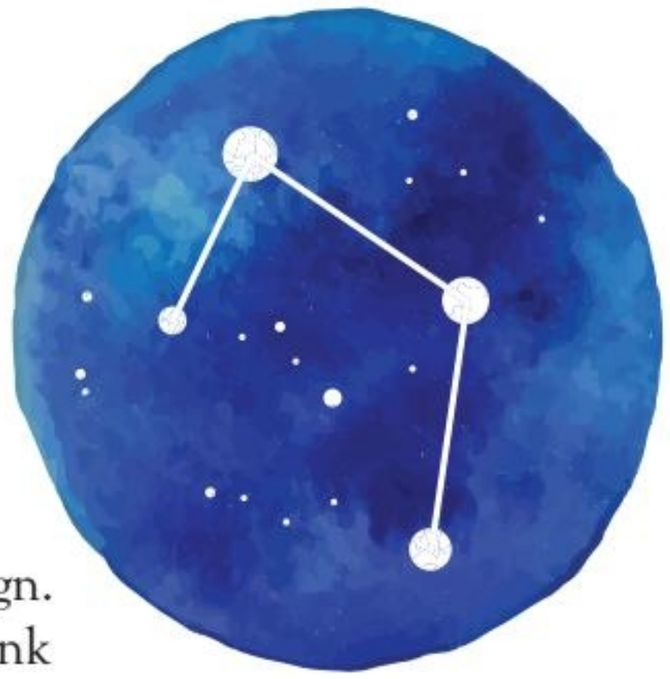
Jessica Hayes, Missy Thomas, Ben Payne

Sounia & Michael Chaney

Laura & Hunter Tiblier

Steady-as-She-Goes!

With the stars in level-headed Libra, balance is everything



By Astrid Stellanova

Librans are no airheads, even though y'all know it is an air sign. Libra is the sign of balance. A true Libran likes nothing more than a balanced bank account and a balance beam. But they also have a very off-kilter sense of humor. Funnyman Zach Galifianakis is a Libran (born in Wilkesboro). Susan Sarandon, Vladimir Putin, Lil Wayne, Serena Williams and Will Smith are Librans too. Imagine having that list of guests for a big ole Libra birthday party, Sweet Things. – *Ad Astra, Astrid*

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Sugar, last month you spent too many hours of your life rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Now, you've found a whole new (read: not lost) cause and that makes you happy. But do take a tee-ninesy bit of time to stretch out on a lounge chair and just look back over the past year. You've weathered some mighty storms, but paddled your way back to shore and survived those stormy seas. This is the month to allow yourself some time for friends and family although you feel pressured to keep your eye on work issues. You have got a good year ahead, with many of your biggest life obstacles faced and overcome.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You've never seen a mirror you didn't like – c'mon, you know there *is* a secret little part of you that does like your own reflection. You invest in yourself and it shows. But consider the hard fact that you cannot eat makeup and become a more beautiful person on the inside . . . that is going to require you to put somebody else ahead of little old you.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
Is Bigfoot real? As real as your windfall fantasies are. Honey, you can keep on buying those lottery tickets and spending your hard-earned cash like you already won, but it ain't going to get you where you need to be. The truth is this: People admire you for your imagination. But use it to create, not to build castles in the air.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
You got a shock and a bad break. Things should have gone differently. Life can be a lazy Susan of crap cakes, and we all get a serving sooner or later. But here's the nice part: The month ahead will not be more of the same. In fact, something you missed out on is gonna present itself again – a second chance, Sweet Thang.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
It has been a lonely chapter for you, and you went into full-on hermit crab phase and buried yourself at the home front. Look, Honey, your best friend is not your salad spinner. You have a lot of friends who miss their pal. If you only knew how many consider you a role model, you'd put the lettuce in the Frigidaire and get out more.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Your never-ending urgency is like a 24/7 emergency. Are your pants on fire or is that just smoke you're blowing? Have you noticed how often you ring the bell, crack the whip and sound all alarms, only to have bewildered looks or eye rolls follow? Maybe try being a little more sensitive; try meditating. Just keep your hands off the alarm.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
This is when the stars move into your complementary opposite, but you sometimes lack the gumption to appreciate it. October is when Aries will grow nostalgic for the green promises of spring, and miss out on the beauty of the fall. Balance in all things, if you want to be a sure-footed Ram. Look up to the night sky!

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
As much as you like to think of yourself as a trendsetter, a few people see it differently. Like, rumor has it that the last original thought you had was probably back when vinyl still ruled. That galls you, right? Ain't fair, right? So prove the rumormongers wrong. How? Stop dragging out the same old same old.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
The crazy train had not even left the station before you decided to kick all the passengers off. Sugar, you are the conductor. The destination is sometimes to the town of Wonderful Madness and sometimes somewhere else. Don't leave friends guessing – where exactly is this train going, and why are we all here?

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
The year has been so topsy-turvy you have had a tough time calibrating. This is a good month to chill and watch the leaves change, Baby. Take a road trip to some place you like and try and find solid ground. It isn't possible to balance by standing on one foot and playing it all Zen, when you really feel Elvis-like and all shook up.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
The Leo nature can be melancholic. You call it *philosophical.* But, face it, Honey; some think you've just been in a bad mood for several years. If you decide to be *less* philosophical and more grateful, you would find that you have talents you haven't used and friends who don't even know you miss them.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
If this year taught you anything, it's pithy things like have an attitude of gratitude. Stitch that onto a pillow where you can see it. When you take stock this fall, notice that it is life changing to let those who made your good fortune possible know you are aware. Unseen hands have helped you; now move your lips and say "thank you.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Ecce Homo

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

Fortune's Bounty

On Sept. 3, 1748, the Colonial town of Brunswick, across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington, was attacked by three Spanish ships, causing the townspeople to flee. Many ships in the port were destroyed. Three days later, a group of local men under the command of Capt. William Dry, a planter and early settler of Brunswick, returned to drive out the Spanish. Thirty prisoners were captured. The remaining Spaniards fled to the privateer La Fortuna, which was anchored in the Cape Fear River. Suddenly there was a huge explosion, which destroyed the ship and killed 90 onboard. The other two ships retreated back down the river to Smith Island (now Bald Head), where they exchanged prisoners. Among the spoils of the Fortuna discovered in the captain's cabin was the painting above, *Ecce Homo* (Behold, the Man!) by the Spanish painter Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654). In 1751, the North Carolina General Assembly presented the painting to St. James Episcopal Church in downtown Wilmington, where it remains to this day.

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Professional choreographers team up with filmmakers to create a one-of-a-kind sensory experience combining dance, film, visual art, and music.

Wednesday, Nov 8th @ 7PM

Visual/Sound/Walls

A curation of mind-blowing music videos in a seamless flow of eye-popping entertainment projected onto all surfaces. Our opening night party!

Wednesday, Nov 8th @ 9PM

Oyster Party

Help us celebrate the Connect Conference at the Bellamy Mansion with a night of performances, installations, and lots and lots of oysters!

Friday, Nov 10th @ 4PM

10x10 Challenge Screening

10 filmmakers and 10 local startups make a film in less than a week. Check out the products of these collabs on the festival's closing day.

Sunday, Nov 12th @ 7PM

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